

The Mussolini,



Pacelli



and Marconi

Clash



By Ray Payette

© Copyright 2009, Raymond Payette

What do we believe about Pope Pius XII?

During the 2nd World War he remained neutral about the atrocities against the Jews.

What do we believe about Marconi?

He invented wireless communications.

These beliefs are not quite true!

Machiavellianism

It's springtime in Entoto, Abyssinia, where Menelik 2nd reigns as the heir to the princes of the Shawa, a province of the empire where he is the Negus, the king of kings.

What was the poet Arthur Rimbaud doing in Abyssinia in 1885? Avowed homosexual at a time when that was scandalous, he is a wreck of life that shot his best friend, Verlaine, and wounded him. He enrolled in the Dutch army only to desert shortly thereafter. He joined a circus troupe and finally became an arms dealer in Abyssinia. Wanting to profit from the civil war, he purchased weapons with the expectation of selling them at great profit. Menelik 2nd having seized power before the weapons were offered to him, he buys the stock at rock bottom price from the poet who wanted to become an arms dealer. It was a poetic victory for Menelik 2nd.

The Italians, aspiring to possess many colonies like other European countries, are already masters of Somalia and Eritrea that neighbor Abyssinia. They proposed a peace and cooperation treaty to Menelik 2nd who accepted.



Negus, Menelik 2nd

Following some meddling from the Italians, one of Menelik 2nd advisors confided to him:

— Honorable sire, the Italians, with whom we have signed a diplomatic agreement, have deceived us!

— What do you mean?

— Sire, clause 17 of the Uncial treaty written in Italian is different from our Amharic version.

— So?

— The Italian language is preponderant in this treaty. Consequently according to the Europeans this clause establishes that Abyssinia is an Italian protectorate and the Italian army will not leave the city of Adour until we accept the Italian interpretation.

— This Machiavellian scheme will not challenge my

reign on Salomon's throne!

The Negus' army drums started rolling to muster the troops. Menelik 2nd denounced Italy's treachery and he reimbursed the four million liras borrowed from the Italians.

As far as the Italians were concerned, they considered the Abyssinians as rebels of little importance. In fact, Barrater, the general in chief, promises to capture Menelik 2nd and to bring him to Rome in a cage, as Cesar had done with Vercingetorix, the Gaul chief.

In 1896 an Italian officer informs general Baratieri:

— General we received a message from Prime Minister Crispi ordering you to attack the rebel forces as quickly as possible.

— Let's get out of our fortifications and attack Adoua on the 1st of May, the day of their national holiday when they won't suspect anything!

17,700 soldiers march out of the fortress but their guides are Menelik's men who lead them astray. The Negus' troops, numbering over 100,000 soldiers strong, have modern rifles and Arabic horses. They come out of everywhere and like a desert storm they envelop the Italian army. Since Hannibal's conquests, it's the first African victory over the Europeans.

Abyssinia gets its independence and becomes Ethiopia.

Crispi is kicked out of office.

Italy is humiliated. During 40 years, she will be the laughing stock of the entire world, until Mussolini avenged her!

Magicians

The magicians of electricity, such as Volta, Galvani and Hertz, transformed the world.

In 1895, the electrical systems weren't perfectly isolated and they produce many sparks that Alexander Popov attempted to understand and control. Later, Popov worked at the Russian Institute of Forestry, where he tried to make a device capable of detecting electrical discharges from lightning that cause forest fires. To carry on his experiences, it was necessary to create sparks with another device, which he made. He conceived a system creating and detecting sparks. He knew that waves produced by lightning could originate from far away and he wanted to imitate this phenomenon. He invented the antenna that enabled sending signals much farther.

Sometime later, on May 7th 1895, in a packed lecture room of Saint-Petersburg University, Alexander Stepanovich Popov was playing with some electrical equipment. On the class blackboard there were Morse code symbols.

Popov didn't like to speak in public. He preferred to work alone without having to worry about others. He liked to experiment peacefully without any distraction. He had the jitters.

The students were jockeying as they were crammed like sardines in order to witness an experiment with electricity and electromagnetic waves.



Alexander Popov

Professor Petruchevsky was proud of that moment. During many years he fought against red tape to obtain the best books and laboratories in Russia, until he succeeded.

He was happy to have allowed Popov to travel to the international expo in Chicago in 1893 and to make some industrial visits in the United States!

He had the feeling that Popov was an out of the ordinary researcher. It was with pride that he presented him to the students and other researchers.

— Dear students! For those who don't know me, I would like to present myself, Petruchevsky, president of the Russian Society of Physics and Chemistry.

I have the pleasure of introducing you Alexander Popov, who works here at the department of

electricity of the University of Saint-Petersburg.

The spectators spontaneously applaud.

Popov is not very comfortable in front of all these people because he fears that his experience will fail and that he will become everyone's laughing stock. Even though he conducted this experience many times, the slightest error may ruin the tests.

Petruchevsky smiles. After having waited for the applause to subside he says:

— Popov was working in Kronstadt on the isle of Kotlin not far from Saint-Petersburg, at the Russian fleet's torpedo school. Today, the 7th of May 1895, during the demonstration entitled *The relation of metal powders to electrical oscillations*, he will perform a unique experience that I would qualify as being historical.

He pauses to take a deep breath and he continues.

— He'll send a message to his assistant, Ribkin, who's in another university building 200 meters away. I'm letting professor Popov explain what will happen.

Petruchevsky yields the floor to Popov.

Popov, who is preoccupied by his demonstration, becomes aware that he has the floor.

— In a few moments we will receive a message from my assistant.

— Please, Petruchevsky steps in, for the benefit of the students can you explain how your device works?

— Of course. My assistant Ribkin has a device called a coherer invented by Branly. That device produces electromagnetic waves with iron filings. Here, I have a device, a decoherer that receives

signals from mister Ribkin.

Popov looks at his watch.

— In a few seconds we should hear the bell ring according to the electromagnetic signals produced by mister Ribkin.

Petruchevsky wants people to understand what will be going on.

— You see on the blackboard, we have written the Morse code used in sending telegraphic messages. In a moment, you will be witnesses to the first transmissions and reception of wireless telegraphy. Mister Ribkin will send us a message that we will decipher using the Morse code that has combinations of short and long signals.

A few seconds after, some signals are heard. Popov is obviously relieved.

— The bell's 4 shorts are an H; one short is an E; two shorts are an I; a long and a short are the N....

Petruchevsky writes the letters on the blackboard as soon as they are heard. The message reads: HEINRICH HERTZ

Popov says in all simplicity:

— There!

Petruchevsky continues his presentation:

— In a few minutes mister Ribkin will join us to tell us what message he sent.

Everybody listens in silence and a few minutes later, the assistant Ribkin enters the room. He shows a sign where is written HEINRICH HERTZ.

Petruchevsky declares triumphantly:

— You have just seen the proof of wireless telegraphy! We have to congratulate our eminent professor. Imagine what this invention will now allow

us to do!

Everybody applauds; it's more exact to say that the Russians applauded because most of the people outside Russia will never hear of this triumph.

The students and professors who have witnessed this historic event return to their occupation, proud at working in such a dynamic environment.

Petruchevsky is enchanted at being the catalyst who made such discovery possible that will be part of Russia's glory.

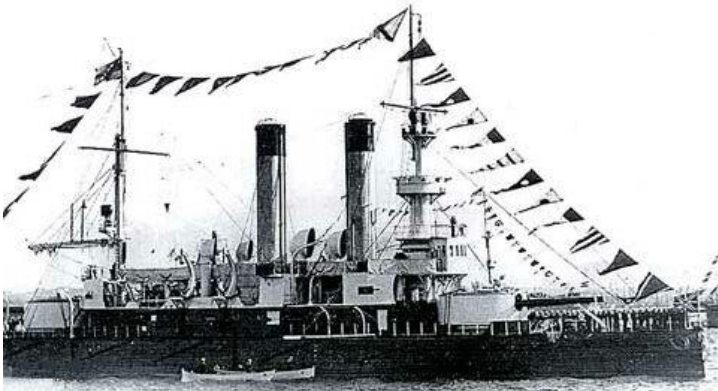
Popov returns home, glad to continue his other experiments that are as interesting to him. He yearns to contemplate the family icons inherited from his father that are a constant source of inspiration.

Soon, Popov will succeed in saving many lives that will bring him admiration and respect from all of his countrymen. Unfortunately international recognition eludes him, like electromagnetic radiation that dissipates into space.

Invisible reality

Here is how Popov saved many lives with his invention, wireless telegraphy.

Since October of 1897, the ices were forming in the golf of Finland. In November, after a wrong maneuver, the ship Генерал-Адмирал Апраксин¹ runs aground of the isle of Gogland² south of Stockholm that was once the home of the Vikings.



The Apraksin

Even after repeated efforts to free it, the ship is still imprisoned by the ice, squeezed as in a vice.

The ice bank that covers the surface impedes in the

¹ General-Admiral Apraksin

² Not to be confused with Gotland!

installation of an under-water cable that could be used for communications. The isle is far from the shore and semaphore or signal flags are of no practical use. The ship's officers discuss the possible solutions to solve this difficulty. The captain 2nd rank, named because of his social standing, wants to show that he has good ideas:

— Captain, we can't extract the Генерал-Адмирал Апраксин embanked on the isle of Gogland and we must be careful of winter that is nearly upon us. A solution would be to wait till spring when the ice will melt.

— It would be much too dangerous, answers the captain, because at each tide large chunks of ice will move and they could easily climb up one upon the other; that would risk crushing the ship under the ice.

—At the beginning of springtime we could free the ship with an ice-breaker.

— That a possible solution. However we should know the exact time the ice-breaker could start its work. If the ice is not free enough, the ice-breaker won't be able to approach the ship. If we wait too long, we risk that the ice will crush the ship. We have an window of only one tide to intervene and that represents about six hours. It would be very useful to have a communication system that would alert the admiralty of the state of the ice bank.

— Captain, last May I attended an amazing demonstration at the University of Saint-Petersburg. Professor Popov invented a device to do wireless telegraphy. I've seen it work. He uses electromagnetic waves that propagate in the air and

that allow far away communications.

— It would be ideal. We could install one device on the ship and another in Kotka, forty kilometers to the north.

— I'll take care of it captain!

One coherer, electrical batteries as well as a decoherer are installed on the ship and in Kotka. The equipment is tested and the communications are established.

The captain is satisfied at his captain 2nd rank and he tells him. He knows very well that his praises will be told in the chic salons of Moscow for aristocracy's sheer delight.

During the month of March of the following year the sun begins melting the ice pack and thereby creating a thick fog over the sea, a fog that does not lift. This hides an imminent catastrophe. It misleads the numerous experienced fishermen who have dug holes in the ice and dropped fishing lines. An ice bank detaches itself from the ice pack. The sailors who watch diligently the surroundings notice that there are many people standing on the detached ice bank. Aware of the danger, they call for help. One of the sailors warns a captain 2nd rank of the Генерал-Адмирал Апраксин.

— Captain, a portion of the ice pack detached itself from the ice pack and there are about thirty fishermen on it.

— Did you try to get to them with a boat?

— It's impossible to put a boat at sea from the Апраксин.

— Let's ask for some help using our new communication devices.

The captain 2nd rank goes to the telecommunication room and he sends a distress message.

The Kotka station receives the message that is relayed to the ice breaker *EPMAK*, the Ermak that heads for the ice bank. The ice breaker advances at full speed, uplifting the ice in front of it.³ The ice breaker reaches the ice bank and saves the fishermen. The Ermak sends a message to the admiralty informing them of the rescue. The admiral says:

— Bravo, we succeeded in saving twenty-seven fishermen with the new devices provided by professor Popov. This is a world premiere. I will recommend that we equip all of our ships with these devices.

During that time in Italy, Marconi was proceeding with his experiments.

³ Much later the ice breakers will be modified to crush ice under them with their weight which is much more efficient.

Prisoner of the Vatican

Following the French Revolution, there were many uprisings against monarchies everywhere in Europe. This had an impact on the papacy because many kings were crowned by the pope in order to legitimize their accession to power and bestow upon them a divine authority.

Moreover, Italy's fragmentation into princedoms and Papal States precipitated a nationalist movement under the leadership of Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi; this movement gave birth to the "Carbonari" and the *Risorgimento*.

Garibaldi and the red shirts succeeded in uniting Italy by conquering the principalities and the Papal States. The Carbonaris were subjected to an excommunication that increased the rivalry between nationalist Italians and the papacy.

Rome was declared Italy's capital in December 1870 and Pope Pius IX, who was opposed to this annexation, took refuge in the Vatican where he and his entourage considered themselves prisoners.

This situation, where the Pope was stateless, was called "Rome's problem" by the Curia. As a sign of mourning the Pope's entourage dressed themselves in black and the Italians called them the "black nobility".

Catholic nobility

The Pacelli family had settled in Rome many generations ago and it was part of the “black nobility”. Eugenio Pacelli’s great-grandfather had been Pope Gregory XVI’s Minister of Finance. His grandfather had been the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his father was the founder and editor of the Vatican’s newspaper, *l’Osservatore Romano*, which is the Vatican’s official voice. His uncle Caterini is a cardinal. His father is a catholic consistorial lawyer who works at the Sacra Rota that is principally mandated to examine requests of marriage annulment.⁴

Eugenio has a brother, Francesco, who will become a lawyer and two sisters, Giuseppina and Elisabetta. His family life is simple, frugal and sober. There are a few amusements and it is normal for a young Italian of that era to turn to reading and studies. Indeed Eugenio’s sisters sometimes tell their mother: “Mama, Eugenio studies too much!”

⁴ The annulment is based on partial consent that is the immaturity of one of the parties. Divorce is not recognized by the Catholic Church and only annulments are possible in certain cases.

Nobody is really preoccupied by it. Eugenio is particularly well versed in Latin and ancient Greek. Of course Eugenio has other occupations. He rides horses, goes swimming, plays the violin and collects medals of all kinds, but since he's skinny and frail, he has no physical aptitude to talk of.

The Pacellis don't eat for pleasure, they eat only to feed themselves; it's a family tradition. Moreover Eugenio has a fragile digestion. Life pivots around the saving of the soul that requires abstinence and sacrifice.

Eugenio is not really attracted by young girls. His knowledge of sexuality is limited because the subject is taboo as it is everywhere in Italy at that time and that subject is never brought up in good families.

The papacy and Catholicism were then confronted by anticlerical mobs and the police even had to intervene to prevent that Pope Pius IX's casket be thrown in the Tiber river during his funeral cortege. Facing these troubles, Pope Leon XIII interdicted Catholics from voting and from participating in any political activity in Italy — "neither elector nor voter". At high school, Eugenio has anticlerical teachers and students laughed at the "black nobility".

He has the following thoughts:

"I have to act as a good Christian and I must avoid the ways of evil that abound around me. Let the will of God fulfill itself!"

He learnt while very young to deal with people of authority that have values that are diametrically opposed to his own. He defended himself from them the best he could without provoking them,

which seemed to be the best solution in those circumstances. This trait will follow him throughout his life.

In such a social and family context Eugenio had to double his efforts to promote his profoundly catholic convictions.

Vocation

Eugenio followed a long road to find his vocation. After having completed the equivalent of his high school certificate he went to a closed retreat to clarify his feelings and to set aside any doubt he might have. He wanted to become a priest but he had to be absolutely certain that is what God expected of him. In Ste-Agnes' chapel there were images of Saint-George killing a dragon and the Virgin Mary stepping on a serpent. A priest, advancing on the nave, was dressed up with a helmet, armor and a sword to dramatize his teachings on mores:

— Life is a combat between the divine forces and those of Satan. It is a perpetual struggle that you will have to encounter every day of your lives. Satan is as omnipresent as God is and all of your lives you will have fight without any mercy against the forces of evil.

The priest gesticulates as if he was in a combat.

— You will have to be constantly on your watch because the devil disguises himself in a thousand and one ways. He is everywhere and he changes forms. He can become a pauper who begs for your pity. He can even change himself into a priest who implores you to commit some wrong. So be careful! This malevolent being is extremely pernicious. If you aren't always on the lookout, he will drag you without warning to your spiritual damnation. Pray the Lord to help you!

All Catholics and especially priests must aspire to

become saints. They are recognized as saints by the Catholic Church after having succeeded a canonization process that is concluded by a papal sanctification. The person held to be in odor of sanctity must be deceased and generally a minimum five years must have passed since his death. The investigation process is started by the bishop of the Diocese that has made the petition. If he agrees that the process continues the Holy See issues a « *nihil obstat* » that is an affirmation that there is no impediment to the proceedings.

The primary phase consists in determining whether the candidate has lived according to the heroic virtues before being recognized as *venerable*. The bishop consults his entourage to establish whether it is appropriate to proceed.

When this phase is finished the documentation is sent to the Congregation of the Rites⁵. A “devil’s advocate”, the promoter of the Faith, is named to contest the affirmations and he prepares a *positio* that attempts to prove the martyrdom or the virtuous heroism under the auspices of a *relator*. If the document receives the assent of the bishops and the cardinals of that Congregation, the file is sent to

⁵ Now known as the Cause of the Saints

the Pope who will issue a decree.

To obtain a beatification, a miracle resulting from the candidate's intercession, must be recognized and proven.

To be canonized as saint a second miracle occurring after the beatification must be recognized and proven.

A traditional hero is a person of an exceptional courage or nobility who has risked his life in attempting an exploit. We often take as example warriors who fight to protect their homeland. A catholic hero is different from a warrior. According to the catholic sanctification process, the hero's virtues are faith, hope and charity as well as the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, courage and others. Any member of the clergy who fully lives his Christianity knows well these qualities that he practices at every moment of his life. These virtues apply to all of God's creations and Christian charity must be as generous for pagans as for Catholics.

In addition a hand to hand combat is considerably different from a combat fought by a whole community. A hero must strive to survive because if he is dead he of course won't be able to help others. It would be yielding to the pressures of evil, and very imprudent, to imperil the whole community. A leader must be able to hold back his inclinations.

At the end of the session, Eugenio closes his eyes to concentrate on his reflections. He sees himself at the head of a multitude of priests clinging to their breviaries, of nuns fingering their rosaries and some faithful praying on their knees. It faces an army of

monsters all uglier and viler than the next, bloodthirsty, with cruel looks and a vicious demeanor. The good are in lightened clouds whereas the evil are steeped in pestilence and putrefactions. The good souls are praying with a subliminal intensity while the forces of evil are suffering terribly from their infernal destiny.

When he comes out of his dream, Eugenio is alone in the chapel. This retreat was crucial. Now he is absolutely certain of his vocation, he will pursue his dream and will become God's servant. He goes back home contented, his heart certain of his future. He has decided to devote his life to fight against the forces of evil. He gives up his life to defend Christ and Catholicism not only in spreading the word of Jesus but also in conducting himself as he believes Christ would have wanted him to. He will be vigilant and he will avoid devilish persons who use every means to suborn the faithful.

Having decided to become a priest he looks at life differently. Now he becomes acutely aware of the sacrifices of parents, of the idleness of youth, of the cupidity of the masses and of the vulnerability of those in misery.

He now looks differently at girls repelling all sexual desire. Obviously at certain times his body reminds him that he was made for pleasure, but it is a temptation he resists. He uses different approaches to quell his sexual drives. For example he never talks first at women and even less at girls. When he has a conversation with persons of the feminine sex, he talks to her as if she is one of his sisters, politely and with respect. He avoids looking directly

at women and girls unless it is absolutely necessary. When the temptations are felt, he changes the subject by thinking of the torments of Jesus Christ's crucifixion.

His path leads him to the Capranica seminary where he begins his priestly studies; life is austere and difficult. The meals are meager but Eugenio is accustomed to them. The rooms don't have any heating and it is cold but he must tough it out; to sleep he thinks the Christ's road to his crucifixion. He sleeps little and he's weak. He shivers. He never complains because suffering is part of the daily life of most human beings. He seeks solace in prayers. He trembles and coughs but he tries to do it as discreetly as possible. He has difficulty in concentrating but he must overcome each trial. His cough gets worse. He tries to eat more, but he's less and less hungry. He's always cold.

The showers are frigid. He has a fever and he is at the end of his capacities. He becomes sick and the doctor orders him to stay at home. He can't continue but he insists. He begs his parents to let him go on because that is his destiny.

The pope hears about him from his uncle and he dispenses him from being a resident and Eugenio accepts reluctantly. His health improves. His prayers were answered and he can continue his road towards his destiny.

He now follows courses at the University of Rome where he's confronted to the new ideas discussed in that stimulating environment. At that time the Marxist doctrine is chic. One of the precepts of communism is that religion is the opium of the

people; that entails that the political authorities use religion to subdue the people and render them docile and submissive. Eugenio is not at all of that opinion but he keeps it to himself in order not to provoke any dispute.

Moreover, Marxism promotes materialism where the production of goods is essential to the wellbeing of society. This notion of historical materialism ostracizes those that aren't productive, such as the contemplative monks, which is ridiculous to Eugenio who believes that praying is the most useful act one can do.

Hence individualism must make way to the wellbeing of the community and it is a serious fault, according to communism, to seek individual happiness at the expense of that of the community. Hence Marx' famous sentence could become: "Work is the opium of the people!"

When he passes his philosophy and literature exams, Eugenio makes do the best he can with those views that are completely opposite to his own. For him, it is the love of God that is true happiness, productive or not. That love translates into the love of mankind and its accomplishments where work is of course a component. He admires the artisans who are passionate about their work, but to make it a religion would be something else! His struggle has begun!

His path has led Eugenio to the pontifical University of the roman seminary. During a course of the catholic religion's history the professor declares: — Italy is heir to a long history of Catholicism that has important repercussions to this day.

In year 321 the roman emperor Constantine the Great allowed the Christians to exist legally which was forbidden up to then and he gave them the right to own property. Previously Christians were considered as reactionaries and were destined to be used as lion meat in the arenas. The document known under the name *Constitutum domini Constantini imperatoris* was composed of two parts: the « *Confessio* », that testified to the gradual conversion of emperor Constantine to the Catholic faith following his cure of leprosy according to the teachings of Pope Sylvester I and, and the *Donatio*, that recognized the Pope as successor to Saint Peter and gave him a status superior to all other patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and of Jerusalem and of all bishops of the world. Constantine became Christian on his death bed in order to absolve himself of all former sins.

The cardinals would receive the same honors and privileges as senators. The Pope would receive the same rights to honors as the emperor including the right to wear a crown, be it a triple crown, the tiara, a purple chasuble and tunic as well as distinctive adornments. Many of the religious traditional take root in this pagan origin!

The Latran basilica in Rome, built by Constantine, was more impressive than the churches of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

The emperor granted the Christians the Latran palace as well as many provinces, districts and Italian cities.

These properties formed the core of the *Patrimonium Sancti Petri*, Saint Peter's heritage to

which innumerable donations of rich families were added. When the donations dwindled in the year 600, this heritage included many properties in Sicily, in Syracuse, in Palermo, in Tuscany, in Ravenna, in Genoa, in Sardinia, in Corsica as well as the isle of Capri and the city of Rome and its duchy.

The income generated by these vast properties was used not only for the benefit of the Pope but also to build churches, refuges, orphanages, hospices for pilgrims and even tributes to liberate Christians. Many kings and emperors including Charlemagne have added privileges and wealth to Saint Peter's heritage. In 1305 there were even French land properties that became papal lands. This heritage belonged to the Holy See, the *Sancta Sedes* that means the seat of Saint Peter, the original place of Catholic authority and by extension it also means the Holy Father.

The Donation of Constantine is falsely based on a forged document made in the Eighth or Ninth century. This document was instrumental in motivating Pepin the Short to make donations of the Papal States to the church. It took hundreds of years before the Holy See acknowledged this hoax. The ensuing legend of Constantine's generosity is being repeated even up to now days. History is full of errors that are difficult to correct.

Eugenio got excellent marks, so much so that at his graduation Pope Leon XII congratulated him personally. When a young man receives such an acknowledgement his soul transforms itself and it becomes easy to adopt a distinct personality. This is how he became deacon Pacelli, servant of Christ,

shepherd to the faithful, fisherman of souls.

Some pious guests converge towards the private chapel of Cardinal Francesco di Paola Cassetta. The candles and chandeliers propagate a mystical glimmer. The ceiling and the walls are adorned with angels, cherubs and images of Christ who preaches to his disciples and to a crowd. There a few people in the small chapel. On a card it is written:

“Ordination of Eugenio Pacelli, April 2, 1899.” The organ and the choir sing some music by Bach. A bishop and his assistants are dressed with superb sacerdotal clothing. After the calling of the candidate, the questioning, the acceptance, the inquiry, the promise of obedience of the candidate, the Pacelli novice lays down on the floor face forward to receive the soul of Jesus. He feels the serenity and the plenitude of this achievement when the litany of the Saints is recited. Eugenio rises; the awaited moment is at hand. The bishop invokes the Holy Spirit and places his hands softly on Eugenio’s head. The candidate takes off his deacon garments to put on the stole and chasuble. Then there is the anointment and the benediction of the hands. He receives a paten and a chalice to do the rite of mass. It ends with a mass performed by the now priest. He has become the spokesman of the word of God and his interpreter. The chapel’s bells merrily ring to spread the joy of this wondrous event.

He has accomplished his youthful dream he has become a priest of the Church with the mission of fighting the forces of evil.

Coffin ships

The forces of evil were gripping Ireland in the form of famine.

At the beginning of the 19th century Ireland had eight million inhabitants. Many Englishmen were landowners who rented out their land to the Irish. In 1845 the potatoes who fed most of the poor people had been infected by a sickness, the blight. Those who ate sick potatoes caught typhus or the cholera. Nevertheless landowners continued to export the crop, leaving the inhabitants to die of famine. In a few dozens of years the population was cut in half. In order to survive many Irishmen immigrated to the Americas on coffin ships, so named because one third of the emigrants died on the way. Ireland was then a place of misery that could not sustain a healthy and thriving life. However, the rich could avoid this misfortune.

Whiskey

The Jameson family of Dublin could afford to avoid Ireland's misery.

Andrew Jameson was a Scotsman who knew how to make Scotch whisky, his wife having been brought up in a well known family that worked in that industry. He had immigrated to Ireland to establish the *Jameson Irish Whiskey Company*. His wife followed him to Ireland.

Whiskey requires pure water that is abundant in Dublin, malt and yeast. First the malt is subject to malting that consists of heating and smoking the humid malt in order to start the germination. Jameson's Irish whiskey is less pronounced than Scotch whisky because the malt isn't smoked but roasted. To stop the process at the right moment, and that is the secret, the malt has to be heated with some peat moss that is abundant in Ireland. The malt is then grounded to a puree, yeast is added and when the fermentation is complete and the natural sugar is transformed into alcohol, the product is distilled. The product is poured into old oak barrels and it is aged. The whiskey must be stored at least three years. This is how Jameson answered to the demand of a particular clientele and became rich.

The youngest of four Jameson daughters, Annie, sweet, light brown hair, brown eyes, is comely without being truly lovely. She lives at her father's

home, *Daphne Castle*, in the south-west suburb of Dublin.

Annie is blessed at having an exquisite voice. In her teens she enthalls everyone when she sings at the Bray Methodist Church.

Ever since she was ten years old, on each Tuesday and Thursday she practiced one hour under strict supervision. Each Sunday the choir sang at two masses at ten and eleven o'clock; Annie was present at every session for five years.

One day, after the family attended mass, she asked her father:

— Papa, did you like this morning's choir?

— It was very good. All masses should be accompanied by signing.

— According to the choir's master a music teacher would help me improve.

— Yes, some signing lessons could very well help you. Give me the name of a teacher and I will contact him to that end.

— Thank you very much papa, she whispers softly while kissing him.

Annie takes private singing courses and soon she becomes a soprano soloist in that choir. She gets a host of congratulations and encouragements from the other members of the choir and from the church goers. She dreams of signing in London. Indeed, her teacher assures her that she has all the required talent to succeed and even to triumph there.

One day, during a family dinner, she sets out to make her ambitions known. Knowing the abrasive nature of her father she thinks to herself: "It's

difficult to approach papa on a delicate matter, so I will ask mama to introduce the subject.” She then asks her mother to casually speak about the subject.

— Annie, I’ve received many compliments on your behalf. Many people claim that you are truly gifted with a wondrous voice!

— Thank you mama. My signing teacher told me about a signing competition in London. He believes that I should enter it so that might allow me to pursue my studies at the *Royal Opera House* in London.

— We are a rich and prestigious family of Dublin, intervenes her father, and I don’t want my daughter to sing for a public other than for the church. To sing for a religious choir is praiseworthy, but to do it for monetary purposes, even at Covent Gardens, would be disgraceful for you and our family

People could think that you need to earn money. I have worked hard to make my fortune and I have enough to fulfill all your needs. You don’t need to work and I don’t want you to give the impression that I don’t have enough money to cater to your needs. That would be insulting to me.

Annie is dumbfounded by this refusal. She runs to her room trembling. She stays there until the next day.

The next Monday she goes back to school and to her choir practices on Tuesday and Thursday. When she leaves, she asks a favor from the choir master.

On Sunday mass, Anne sings Brahms’ *Ave Maria* solo that attracts everyone’s admiration. After mass,

on the church's steps, Annie and her parents are praised.

Back at home, Annie sits down in the sumptuous dining room for the family Sunday dinner. Her father notices her attitude and prepares himself for a confrontation. She thinks: "I won't let myself be put down by papa. I'm as strong headed as he is!" She waits until her father has finished blessing that meal to say:

— Papa, how did you like the choir this morning?

— It was all right as always. I must admit that your solo was very good!

— I sang it for you. All of these years of practice and the courses that I have taken and that you financed have been profitable.

— Quite right!

— Last week I spoke to you about a competition, she says with a dry mouth and a nervous smile. As you have witnessed in church this morning I succeeded at everything that I could do here in Dublin. Papa, I'm asking you, no, I implore you to allow me to realize my ambitions and to let me pursue my musical studies in London. You too have emigrated from Scotland to come and purchase the Bow Street Distillery to realize your ambitions I beg of you to give me the same opportunity and to permit me to continue my career in London where I can make you proud of me.

— I forbid you to sing in public other than for the church choir. If you went to London to learn to sing like a vulgar tramp, it would look like you needed to work to eat and our family would become the laughing stock of the English. I will never permit that!

It would be soiling the family's pride to sing for a few schillings in front of them! Never, you hear! Never!

— But I've been singing in public for more than ten years, she cries out while trembling. I have talent and I want so much to use it. You have many great virtues, papa, and I admire you for that. You have succeeded in your endeavors and you have realized your dreams. I also have dreams and they can be fulfilled with your agreement. I want to sing at Covent Gardens. I beg you papa to let me take advantage of this opportunity. The family's name will be enhanced by my behavior, I assure you.

— I forbid you. If you insist and go on with that silly idea of yours, I will disinherit you.

— Dear, you're overreacting! misses Jameson intervenes. You can't disinherit your daughter because she would like to sing at Covent Gardens!

— I can and I will if ever she decides to disobey me, answers Andrew Jameson with a firm voice and an aggressive and authoritarian look. If she sings for the English then I won't give her any money and she will have to tend to her needs. That's all!

Andrew Jameson looks at his wife with a defiant air.

Misses Jameson shuts up and looks down.

Annie, full of rage, goes back to her room crying in utter disillusionment.

It's terrible for a youngster that craves to achieve his ideal to have such an opinionated father.

Annie wanders in the home. She notices the things belonging to her father and she begins to really understand him. She observes that there are many trinkets from Scotland and that her father claims that he is a Scotsman rather than an Englishman.

She understands that her father abhors Englishmen from his hateful discourses that he sometimes holds. Finally she comprehends that it would be a shame for her father if she sang for Englishmen. These are the underlying forces she has to deal with.

After a prolonged reflection she confides to her mother:

—Mama, I have a gift and I would like make use of it but papa forbids me from doing so. Can you try to reason him? I certainly don't want to sit here and wait that a young man comes to ask for my hand. I want to do something with my life.

— Your father only wants your wellbeing. You are one of the most sought after young women in Dublin, if not in Ireland, so be thankful for the place you have in society. You will never have to bother with the small problems in life. You should respect your family and the social standing that we have. Your father has worked very hard to give us the social standing that we benefit from so why challenge him and rebuff him? We have a right to our wealth, our opulence and our prestige. You would dishonor us if you worked as a simple employee for a British theatrical company. I pray you to reconsider what you are proposing.

Annie is hurt and upset because her world has turned upside down and has lost its meaning. Not only has she lost her goals in life but her efforts have crashed against her father's will and in an instant they have been halted. To seek out her mother's backing is futile. She gives up trying to please her stubborn father and her complacent

mother. She wants to quit singing.

She gets depressed. What can she do that her father will not object to? She's disgusted. She certainly doesn't want to become like her mother and become submissive to the fortune and the destiny of a man.

She's eats very little. She doesn't want to see anyone. She likes to go to the nearby sea and to listen to the waves landing on the shore that seem to beckon her to go far away. These waves originate from all kinds of places, from the highest mountain, to the most discreet stream, to a creek that nobody cares about. They're incessant like the beating of nature's heart. This sea caresses her and invites her to her real destiny, a faraway feast where she will find a rich and fulfilling life.

This episode of her life has totally changed her. She looks at her parents differently now. Where they were allies who helped her progression, they have become adversaries that she must deal with. It's a behavior that she despises and she has the firm intention of avoiding it when she will have children of her own.

Moreover, she knows very well that her father's fortune has brought her many benefits that are inaccessible to her friends, but she realizes that her father uses it to intimidate others, including her mother. Annie, rather than rejecting that wealth as others might have done, is determined to benefit from it.

Andrew Jameson knows very well that he has profoundly wounded his daughter and he notices that she is gradually deteriorating, so he joins her in

the living room and he takes that opportunity to persuade her:

—Annie, sit down, I want to talk to you.

She doesn't say anything and sits, her lips pursed and her eyes looking far away.

—You eat very little and you seem distant, lost in your thoughts. You must accept my parental authority and respect my decisions. When you will be more mature you will recognize that I have taken the best decision. Meanwhile you must resume your daily tasks. I have always liked your signing in the choir and you should continue doing so.

— Papa, I will obey you and I will not sing at Covent Garden. I would like to take some time to travel and to mull over this.

— Continue.

—Here in Ireland misery is all around us and the atmosphere is atrocious. I would like to go to Italy and learn *bel canto*. That would do me a lot of good.

— What is this “bell can too”?

— It's the art of singing lyrics in operas. It's an Italian technique of signing.

— Very well then! This request is reasonable. A young woman of your age should improve herself. I'll finance your trip to Europe. You must admit that I am conciliatory!

— Thank you papa.

— You will stay with the Renolis in Bologna in Italy as they're a very respectable banking family.

— Fine.

She feels comforted. She can't stand to live in such a stifling environment. She says to herself: “I'm exiling myself to Italy where I hope my destiny lies.”

Silk

Annie travels to Italy where she is welcomed by the Renolis. She intends to visit this country that she loves so well, beginning with Venetia and Tuscany. She falls in love with the temperate climate, the lush vegetation and the warm and friendly people. She learns Italian with pleasure and ease.

During a dinner, the Renolis present her Giuseppe Marconi a rich Italian farmer who is 17 years older than she is; he's a widower and the father of a boy, Luigi. He is a mature man, overflowing with energy. He comes from the Apennine mountains between Florence and Bologna. For a few years he lived with his father, Domenico, and his son.

Giuseppe and his father have bought the Villa Griffone in Pontecchio, a few kilometers from Bologna.



Villa Griffone

It's a functional and austere house built in 1600 by the Griffone family. Now Domenico tends to the

farming of silk worms while Giuseppe cultivates maize, vines and chestnuts.

Italy has a long tradition in the silk industry. Till the 6th century A.D., China forbade the export of silk threads and anyone attempting to export the worm cocoons was put to death. In 550 A.D., two missionaries who lived in China managed to bring back to Constantinople some silk worm cocoons as well as some seeds to plant mulberry trees that are necessary to feed the silk worms. Italy has a climate zone that is appropriate for that tree. All one needs to do is to gather mulberry leaves and let the silk worm eat them until they morph into cocoons that will be boiled and spun as silk. One cocoon can produce a 350 meters long thread and it takes 5,500 cocoons to produce one kilo of silk. But such a superb natural textile it makes!

Giuseppe and his brother Arcangelo have attended the seminary. Giuseppe had a good education however he wasn't attracted to priesthood because he would rather work at the family farm. He married the daughter of a rich banker. Unfortunately his wife died nine months later at the birth of their son. Nevertheless he kept a good relationship with his wife's family, the Renolis, who present him a comely young lady.

Giuseppe asks Annie to walk with him in the countryside, but she's hesitant to accompany a man so different from her. He asks the Renolis what she likes. Learning her passion for the opera, Giuseppe invites her to La Scala in Milan. She accepts and she is delighted to operas by Verdi, who was then Europe's furor.



Verdi

Annie regularly sends news to her mother who informs her husband. Even though Annie had asked to stay only one season to change her ideas, she now tells her mother that she's so happy there that she wants to stay another season. Time passes and the seasons become years. Her mother asks her when she will come back but Annie avoids the subject. Her mother writes to her that it would be time that she would come back, to which she answers:

"Dear mother and Dear father,
Italy is so marvelous and the Renolis are so

charming that they nearly consider me to be their daughter. I speak Italian fluently and I'm continuously learning the history and the culture of this country with which I have fallen in love. It is the land of Vivaldi, Puccini and Verdi who have composed the most beautiful music in the world. I regularly go to Milan to see some operas that are absolutely enchanting. I feel at home here and I'm so happy here; I think that I will stay one year more! Your devoted daughter,
Annie”

Her parents become unnerved when they read that letter. They dared not insist that she return to Ireland for fear of crossing her. They didn't answer her letter for the time being.

Now, Annie can think about her future and she accepts Giuseppe's advances. Shortly thereafter they fall in love with each other. Giuseppe makes love to her, taking her virginity with as much tenderness and patience as possible. According to the Catholic faith and many other religious cultures virginity is an extremely precious treasure because it represents purity. Even though virginity is important for Protestants, it's more a proof of good mores. At that time a young Italian woman had to be a virgin when she married. Giuseppe feels responsible for that deflowering and he wants to make amends by marrying her which he quickly asks. Annie is very happy at the outcome of recent events, however she fears that she won't be able to get her parents' consent for this marriage. She thinks:

“My father refused that I become a singer, he'll

certainly refuse that I wed Giuseppe. This time I won't give way to his intimidation."

She begins by writing to her parents telling them that she met a charming Italian. She vaunts Giuseppe's qualities as a rich landowner and manufacturer. She points out his strong family ties as well as his work ethics and his integrity.

Her mother answers that she should be prudent and not to let her feelings err and that she should use some common sense.

Annie confides that she has much affection for Giuseppe. She lauds his appearance, his good health and his opulence. She stresses that he has a stable, peaceful and affectionate character. She declares that he is a man any young women would be proud of marrying.

Her mother was upset by these revelations and replies that it would be premature to speak of marriage. She suggests that Annie come to Ireland to better explain her feelings.

Annie returns to Ireland but before leaving she talks to Giuseppe and, as she anticipates some disapproving measures from her parents, she takes some measures to stay in contact with Giuseppe.

Annie Jameson asks her father with apprehension:

— Papa I have an important request to make to you.

— What?

— As you know, Giuseppe and I have been seeing each other for more than a year and we have developed a friendship, affection and love for each other. So, before I came back to Ireland, he asked for my hand in marriage and I have accepted. Of course we would like your approval before getting

married.

— In Italy?

— Yes.

— I didn't send you to Italy so that you would fall for a foreigner. Why don't you marry an Irishman? We could present you a slew of prospects. What can you have in common with an Italian?

— I love him and he loves me. He has a love of life that I don't find here.

— But he's much too old for you! his mother points out.

— I love him and I will always love him whatever age he will have.

— Is he divorced?

— No, he's a widower and he has a son, Luigi.

— Never, I will never give my approval for this marriage, do you hear? her father interrupts. Never. It is out of the question. I refuse to give you up to such a bad party.

— Annie, your father is right, you would be miserable with that man. We cannot give our accord for this marriage.

Annie cries and seeks refuge in her room.

She had anticipated this. She looks as if she had succumbed to her father's will, but she doesn't lapse into despair. She refuses to meet the young men her parents want to present her.

This episode of her life was determinant. She decides to take charge of her future, even if it in conflict with her parents' views. She must show them that her will is as firm as theirs. She writes in secret Giuseppe to explain what has transpired as well as what she intends to do.

The agreed day Giuseppe leaves Bologna, crosses the Alps and goes to Boulogne in France. On the other hand she leaves Dublin and joins him. They go to Italy together and they get married.

She writes to her parents:

“Dear mother and dear father,

I love you and respect you, however I am an adult and I have the right to choose to be happy. I have chosen Giuseppe, not by interest, but because we love each other. Yesterday we got married and I hope that you will bless our union.

Your devoted daughter,

Annie”

There was no reply to this *fait accompli*.

A year later the newlyweds had a first son, Alfonso. At that occasion Annie Marconi's parents had, much to their chagrin, to recognize her decision to stay in Italy and they had to accept the marriage and the birth of their grandson so that she wouldn't part with them.



Guglielmo, Annie, Alfonso

Nine year later the couple had a second son, Guglielmo (pronounced Gu-yelmo), who will have the ambition of his mother.

Annie wanted that part of their education be in English. As for many British citizens staying in Italy to avoid the humid and morose climate of the United Kingdom, she took advantage of the situation and became friendly with the British community.

Unshakeable Intuition

The Marconi family sometimes stayed in Livorno, a Mediterranean port south of Pisa, where there was a vast English community. The English had difficulty in pronouncing Livorno so they called it Leghorn. Sometimes Annie meditated while looking at the sea, relieved at being far away from her previous life, so strict, so sterile. Often the Marconis stayed north of Florence and east of Livorno. There was another English community near Poretta where Annie went bathing to take care of her skin.

One Sunday while she was at home, Annie gathered her children in the living room.

—Even though there is no Protestant church here, let us pray together!

—Mama, Alfonso asks his mother, why don't we go to church like other Italians?

—Because the Italians are Catholic and we're Protestants.

—What difference is there between the Protestants and the Catholics?

—We're Wesleyan Protestants who believe that the Pope doesn't represent God on earth. We believe that we can pray directly to God. Well. That's the main difference.

—And papa?

—He goes to Catholic Church. So, let us pray!

During summer, Annie sent her sons to Bedford or Rugby in England so that they would become familiar with the British culture and that they would learn English. In Italy, the brothers went to a local

school the Casalecchio sul Reno.

One day Guglielmo rushes in and goes directly to his room. Annie, surprised at that behavior, knocks at his door and enters. Annie has a melodious voice that she uses to sooth her son.

—What is going on Guglielmo?

—I don't want to go back to school.

—Why not?

—Because everybody makes mockeries of me.

—What do you mean?

—All the students laugh at my accent.

—But you speak Italian very well! Listen, I'll hire an Italian teacher to help you speak better.

—They only laugh at me. They say that I'm a "bloke" because I wear English clothing.

—From now on you'll wear local clothing like them. Agreed?

—They say that I'm not Italian.

—You are Italian. It's true that you're a very special boy, but you are Italian like your father.

—They say that I will never be Italian because you're not Italian.

—Show them that their remarks don't affect you. Everyone gets laughed at some moment of their life and it's something that you just have to overcome. You're brave, are you not?

—Yes.

—So, prove to them that you're as Italian as they are!

Guglielmo cultivated some friendship throughout of his life, in particular a friend named Luigi Solari, from the Cavalieri school in Florence, who later on worked with Guglielmo till he died and who was his

first biographer.

His ambivalent education, between the Italian culture and the English culture, made him identify himself with the Italian culture where he lived most of the time; in order to be better accepted by his entourage he became very patriotic.

As for his sexuality, neither his father nor his mother talked about that taboo subject. It was something that one learned by himself in the course of life. In fact, other than explaining the basic rudiments on how to make babies, the parents didn't have anything to tell him, because they were ignorant of the subtleties of that delicate subject.

Giuseppe had a voluminous personal library that Guglielmo referred to at will. Moreover he liked to perform some experiments by disassembling different devices.

One day he was very sad and he confided to his mother of a failure at school before his father heard the news.

— Mama, I'm so sorry, I wasn't accepted at the Italian Naval Academy where my friends Filippo and Giulio Camperio are attending.

— You will find other things to do.

— But I would have liked to be an officer on a ship.

— Guglielmo, one day you will have your own ship and you will be its captain.

— Do you really believe so?

— You must believe in it!

— Well, one day I will be captain of my ship. A big ship.

— There! Meanwhile I've invited Vincenzo Rosa to talk to you about some new discoveries in electro-

physics.

— Great!

Professor Righi of the University of Bologna was one of the most advanced scientists in the experimentation of electrical devices. Since Guglielmo's father had friendly relationships with influential people in Bologna, he got the permission to visit the professor's laboratory and to take notes of the equipment he used. On the other hand Annie had already met Professor Righi and had already talked about her son and his experiments. As a good educator, the professor accepted to meet Guglielmo.

— Your mother talked about you, young man. She confided to me that you are genuinely interested in my research.

— Yes indeed, I'm informing myself on all the physics experimentations that are being done with electricity.

— You should follow courses to obtain a degree here at the university. You could take the courses that I give on the subject.

— Unfortunately I didn't succeed in my exams and I'm not admissible to study at this university.

— That's unfortunate.

— Nevertheless I get informed a lot on the subject. I read that Heinrich Hertz had transmitted waves at a distance of forty meters. I think that they could go much farther.

— That's impossible. If you had followed my courses at the university you would know that waves dissipate in an exponential fashion and that

consequently their reach will always be limited.

— Professor, I have a favor to ask you.

— Yes, what is it?

— Would it be possible that I use your equipment when it is free, I'd like to try out some experiments of my own?

— Well all right, however your father will have to pay for any repairs if you damage the equipment.

— Thank you very much! I'll ask my father, but I'm sure that he'll agree.

Guglielmo used that laboratory quite a lot and when he was 20 years old he decided to carry on his experiments in his own lab. However his financial backer, his father Giuseppe, wasn't quite so keen!

— Annie I don't know what to do with Guglielmo. He doesn't have a profession and he only plays with his electrical games in his lab in the attic. He's interested neither in the farm nor in silk. I want to tell him to help me out.

— Giuseppe, have confidence in him! He has a passion for research and he's serious about it. You have the chance of having some money to encourage him. So I pray of you to help him out!

— Precisely, I have money because I worked hard for it, not because of chance. It would be better if he did something more practical.

Annie has an inner strength that she displays. She speaks with a determined yet soft voice that touches her husband's sensibility.

— Giuseppe, please recall that my father destroyed my dream of singing in Covent Garden and that he nearly stopped me from marrying you. Please help him for me!

— Fine, it's only because you request it!

Annie had a self-confidence that she communicated to her son like an invisible force that she shared with him.

She gave Guglielmo some money:

— Here is the amount that you asked for and that your father agreed to give you in order to pursue your research.

— Thanks a lot, answers Guglielmo touched by the confidence his mother has testified to.

This moment is important for him. He becomes aware that his mother has an absolute belief in him and that she has an unshakeable love for him. He promises to himself not to let her down.

A shot is heard

Inside the dark attic, the twenty one years old Guglielmo is working silently with his electrical devices that he recently purchased.

Absorbed by the task at hand, he works on a new test. He adjusts the commands and he regularly taps his finger on a wire in a regular and constant way. Suddenly a gunshot rips the normal silence of the morning and his heart throbs. He jumps up and goes down to the garden. His mother has also heard the gun shot. Worried, she quickly comes out of the house and asks:

—What happened? I heard a gunshot.

Guglielmo hurriedly comes out.

— I succeeded!

Rifle in hand, Guglielmo's brother, Alfonso, and Mignani, the son of a local farmer, come running from the top of a hill. Guglielmo and Annie wait for the arrival of his brother and his friend who must walk about a kilometer down the hill.

Guglielmo thinks to himself:

"I succeeded in transmitting a message much farther away than Hertz forty meters that Professor Righi said was the limit of Hertzian waves. Luckily I had my doubts and I continued my experimentation!"

Alfonso comes closer with a slow stride thinking:

"Guglielmo has always had more attention than me!"

Guglielmo's mouth is dry and his throat is up tight.

— Did you receive my message?

Mignani, enthralled by this fantastic event answers:

— Yes. Guglielmo, you have accomplished a feat!

Alfonso has difficulty in hiding his jealousy.

— I heard a Morse signal, an “s”!

Annie is still worried that someone is wounded.

— But what did you do?

Mignani, enthused by this discovery answers:

— Guglielmo sent some electromagnetic waves from the attic. When we heard them from the other side of the hill, I fired a rifle shot so that Guglielmo would know.

Guglielmo tries to explain it correctly because he’s very excited:

— I transmitted a message without any wire and they received it, three short clicks, at the top of the hill.

— Isn’t it amusing! Alfonso says, flustered.

Annie, noticing Alfonso’s jealousy, says:

— It’s wonderful! Alfonso, you should praise your brother!

Alfonso consents without any conviction:

—Bravo.

Guglielmo realizes his exploit and he wants to reassure his mother.

— I’ll show you mother!

Alfonso feels set aside. The four climb the stairs and go into the attic.

Guglielmo restarts his equipment and a few sparks fly.

Alfonso comments condescendingly:

— It’s nearly magic!

— I only have to open and close the switch to send an electromagnetic signal, Guglielmo says a little

hot-headed. I previously had done some tests with Mignani and he alerted me with a handkerchief but this time I didn't see him because he had gone over the hill. I told him to fire a gunshot that I could listen to from here.

— My God, Annie answers a little mystified, I don't quite understand!

Annie really understood the scientific concept, but she was more preoccupied with the consequences on her husband and on her sons' future.

The day ebbs. Inside the living room, the Marconi family has gathered. Giuseppe didn't look like a farmer rather he looks like an opulent businessman. He had laborers and tenants who he believed robbed him.

Giuseppe prays with devotion:

— Lord, bless us as well as this meal that we are about to eat.

— Amen! The family replies in unison.

Good evening dear, Annie say while cajoling her husband, Guglielmo has something to tell you that will please you.

Giuseppe, with a severe tone of voice remembers the prior conversations and replies:

— What is it now?

Annie, with full faith in her son, wants to win her husband's heart.

— I will let him tell you what happened today.

Giuseppe is curious but he apprehends that there will be a demand for more money.

— Your mother said that you have something to tell me Guglielmo?

Guglielmo answers with precision because he wants his father to recognize what he has done.

— I succeeded at an experiment I made with my electrical apparatus. I sent the letter “s” from the attic with Morse code and Alfonso received it on the other side of the Celestini hill.

Giuseppe cannot conceive of any practical application from that explanation. To him, it’s only an expensive game.

— So!

Guglielmo attempts to underline the extraordinary event:

— There was nothing linking us to each other, no wire, nothing! I produced some electromagnetic waves that Alfonso and Magnani received with an electrical receiver.

Giuseppe doesn’t understand how that could affect a farmer such as him.

— Really!

Annie cannot contain her enthusiasm.

— Isn’t it marvelous dear?

Giuseppe, a bit curious, gives his son the benefit of the doubt.

— What would it be used for?

Guglielmo thinks before answering, aware of the importance of the moment.

— I think that the navy could use it to communicate with ships. They already communicate with flags or lights, but with my invention they could do so even in thick fog.

Giuseppe is intrigued but not impressed.

— One kilometer isn’t very far for a ship.

Guglielmo senses the possibility of convincing his

father.

— That's why I want to pursue my work by increasing its power.

Giuseppe is wise yet skeptical.

— So you want more money?

Guglielmo really believes that it will be a good investment.

— Yes please, that would help me a lot.

Annie not only has a maternal confidence in her son she also has a determination inherited from her father.

—It seems to me that it might be very useful to communicate long distances. Our Guglielmo is so clever!

Giuseppe concedes mainly to please his wife.

— You'll have to demonstrate it to me. If you succeed I'll give you five hundred liras.

Guglielmo is convinced that he'll pass the challenge:

— I thank you very much; that will allow me to purchase some equipment to continue making my experiments.

Annie and Guglielmo go to the attic and they man the equipment. Giuseppe and Alfonso go to the other side of the hill. As soon as they connect the battery, they hear the signal.

Giuseppe examines minutely the receiver and, impressed, concedes:

— He's right and it works even in the dark!

The family goes back home and go to the attic.

Alfonso is obviously envious.

Giuseppe looks at Annie.

— I admit that this invention has potential so I'll help

you out!

Family relations

A few days later the family is in the garden; there is wine on the table. Annie is happy because she's surrounded by the people she loves most.

— Guglielmo, you've received a letter from the Ministry of Postal Services and Telegraph.

Alfonso says matter-of-factly:

— Perhaps it's the answer to the letter papa prepared with the curate and the doctor to obtain a contract from the Italian government.

Guglielmo reads the letter over and over again; he's thoughtful.

Giuseppe is curious when he asks:

— So Guglielmo?

Guglielmo tries to hide his frustration.

— It's essentially an acknowledgment.

Giuseppe is upset:

— They're not interested?

Guglielmo is obviously sad.

— No! The Minister simply states that the government uses the telegraph that is adequate for them. He says that a wireless telegraph would be of no use to them. Still he urges me to continue.

Giuseppe feels insulted.

— Really!

The family is confounded. However Annie remains positive because she has confidence in her son and his destiny.

— We could address ourselves to the British navy. It's only the beginning of our efforts. We won't let ourselves be vanquished at the first setback.

Guglielmo don't lose hope. You must never abandon your dreams. Never, never, never, do you understand? We will solicit Britain.

— I would have preferred doing business with my homeland.

Giuseppe rages over the refusal.

— They have no vision.

Annie, proud to be from the United Kingdom, continues:

— Great Britain has the most prestigious navy in the world. She will be much more apt to recognize the potential of this invention.

Giuseppe doubts the veracity of this affirmation, but he has confidence in his wife.

— Listen to me well Guglielmo, your mother can make you meet many people of influence and authority. These people could help finance your invention and it is essential that you cater to their wishes. If you want to succeed, you must acquire a business sense. We have enough seed money to begin with, but you'll need much more money to start a profitable business. You have the chance and the opportunity to have a mother who can open doors of the British Empire and that is worth a fortune.

Guglielmo answers willingly:

— I'll go to Great Britain as you suggest.

— My cousin, Henry Jameson Davis, is an engineer; he's also a colonel in the army and he has many connections in the British scientific and military circles. I'll ask him to help us.

Giuseppe is won by his wife's vigor.

— Your father should really have let you sing at

Covent Garden!

— As for you Guglielmo, become famous and you will become rich!

A few weeks later Guglielmo puts his electrical devices in a black chest that he locks. All the family takes a coach to get to Bologna.

In the railway station, Guglielmo watches that the chest is properly loaded in the wagon.

Giuseppe and Alfonso wish Guglielmo and Annie good luck as they board the train that will get them to LaSpezia.

On the quay, they have the chest and their luggage transferred to the ship that will get them to England.

In Southampton, they take the train to London.

At their arrival at the Victoria station, Henry Jameson Davis welcomes them with a smile:

— Welcome Annie, what a pleasure to see you again!

Annie kisses her cousin without any embarrassment.

— It's been nine years since you've come to visit us in Italy!

Guglielmo speaks English with a little hesitation:

— Hi Henry, I'm glad to see you again, but I would be in a better mood if the custom agent had not dismantled my invention.

— How's that? Henry Jameson Davis says, intrigued.

— He didn't understand what I had in my chest, answers Guglielmo flustered, because he believed that it was a bomb so he dismantled it. I was certainly not going to explain my invention.

Annie, playful, tries to lighten the atmosphere:

— It is a bomb, but not the kind that destroys the world. This bomb will break the barriers of communication!

Henry Jameson Davis cajoles Guglielmo:

— You're a sly one, like your mother.

Annie is a little obfuscated.

— What do you mean Henry?

Henry Jameson Davis jokingly says:

— Oh! It's an old family story. Guglielmo, before your mother got married, she had a long relationship with Giuseppe that she hid from the family.

Annie feigns her timidity:

— Oh that!

Henry Jameson Davis is satisfied of having revealed a family secret to his nephew.

— Finally we won't have to hide it anymore!

Guglielmo is still worried about his invention.

— I'll have to rebuild my apparatus.

Henry Jameson Davis is sympathetic.

— We will help you out to obtain the pieces you will need; by the way, did you apply to get a patent license?

Guglielmo appreciates this reassuring comment:

— No, not yet!

Henry Jameson Davis is encouraging and in order to respond to Annie's demand in her letter, he proposes:

— It's a good time to do so!

Annie is glad of Henry's intervention and she says:

— Henry, you're a real gentleman.

Rough Negotiation

After having applied for a British patent, Guglielmo receives a refusal. He goes to the patent office to discuss it. He thinks:

“After all this work I’m certainly not going to capitulate at the first objection. I owe it to mother to do everything in my power to overcome this problem. I’m not going to let her down after all she did for me!”

He talks to his mother about it:

— Mama the patent office refused my demand. I’ll go tomorrow to defend it.

Though he was 22 years old, he was nearly as determined as his mother.

— Don’t worry too much I’m certain that you will find the right arguments!

At the patent office an examiner reads Guglielmo’s file:

— We have analyzed your patent application and as we have written to you this invention has already been patented by Nicolas Tesla, so we can’t allow your patent.

— I know this invention and it’s different to mine. The patents 645 576 and 649 621 are based on the propagation of subterranean waves. These patents don’t concern Herzian waves in the atmosphere that are fundamental to my invention. Furthermore Mister Tesla is not the inventor of the reception of electromagnetic waves.

The examiner is embarrassed:

— What do you mean?

Marconi feels that the Tesla invention should not have been accepted by the patent office.

— It was Heinrich Hertz who was the first to transmit electromagnetic waves, but it was a Russian by the name of Alexander Popov who filed patent 2797, the 12th February 1900 that described the receiver.

The examiner is befuddled. A person named Bose seems also to have invented wireless telegraphy, without having applied for a patent.⁶ Moreover, you seem to have been inspired by Professor Oliver Lodge's invention.

— Really! All that needs to be checked out. Marconi replies firmly:

—The question for you is not to determine who first invented wireless telegraphy, but to establish the method and the equipment to do so. My invention is an improvement on the prior art. My electromagnetic detection equipment is different than that of Tesla because it is much more sensitive even if they both have electrical coils.

The examiner remains skeptical.

— I admit that there are significant differences.

Marconi says with a slightly menacing tone:

⁶ The identity of the true inventor of wireless telegraphy is questioned : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invention_of_radio

— Let me remind you that my patent would avoid you some embarrassment.

The examiner doesn't understand.

— What do you mean?

Marconi speaks slowly.

— I will continue my work. If I don't obtain a patent and Mister Tesla sues me, I will undoubtedly reply that the patent office erred in granting him a patent, because in reality it was Alexander Popov who is the inventor of wireless telegraphy, but that is not the question.

It would be most inconvenient for you to be caught up in legal proceedings.

Guglielmo takes a pause and then continues:

— However if I get a patent, nobody will mention Popov who, to this date, doesn't have a patent here. And your reputation will not be imperiled. Furthermore, Tesla is in the United States whereas I intend to develop my invention on British soil. Speak to your superiors and you'll see.

The examiner frets over these arguments.

— I'll think about it.

Back at home Guglielmo lays out the dialogue with the examiner to his mother. She answers:

— I'll see what I can do.

After a few weeks, Annie hands over a letter to Guglielmo who opens it immediately. He reveals to his mother:

— It's a letter from the Intellectual Property Office.

A silence reigns as he reads the letter.

Guglielmo smiles.

— I've been granted a patent for my invention. It is dated the 26th of April 1900 and it has the number

7777!

Annie smiles with enormous satisfaction.

— Luck is on your side!

— That number is identical to the winning number on fruit machines⁷!

— What a coincidence!

She thinks:

“I’m your luck!”

However she knows full well that he must go on with his work because the invention is yet to be commercialized.

⁷ At that time in England the slot machines were known as “fruit machines”.

Inspired visionnairy

Henry Jameson Davis invites Alan Campbell-Swinton for tea at the Savoy. Henry comes a bit early and joins Annie and Guglielmo.

— Henry, how are you my dear cousin?

— Fine! I've invited a friend of William Preece, Britain's chief of the postal service, to have tea with us.

— I must say that you're shrewd!

— I certainly owe you that service! Ah! There he is!

Henry sees him and signals him to the table.

— Annie Jameson and Guglielmo Marconi, I have the pleasure of presenting you Alan Campbell-Swinton, an engineer with whom I do some business.

— How do you do!

— It's a pleasure meeting you!

They sit and have tea with some social biscuits.

Henry starts the conversation:

— Madam Jameson is accompanied by her son, Guglielmo who is an inventor.

— An inventor! What did he invent?

— He invented a way to communicate between two places without using any electrical wire.

— My God, how?

— He uses electromagnetic waves. It's brand new.

— I see! The postal office will have a new competitor.

— I would much rather prefer that it becomes an ally.

— What do you mean madam?

— The postal office would benefit in the development of this new means of communication.

— I see.

— Perhaps you could discuss it with your colleague, William Preece?

— I believe that he would be intrigued because he himself has invented a mode of communication for the telegraph.

— Really! Would you have the kindness to present my son to your friend, William Preece?

— It would be my pleasure, madam.

They finish their tea while talking about the nasty weather.

Alan Campbell-Swinton doesn't delay in writing to Preece and introduce him to Marconi and telling him that he has an invention similar to a British citizen, Professor Oliver Lodge.

Guglielmo feels an internal force that motivates him. When he's alone with his mother at the hotel, he profits from the moment by telling her how he feels:

— Mama, I have a favor to ask you.

— What is it? You know that you can say anything to me. I've always listened to you.

— I appreciate enormously what you have done for me. Believe me, I'm sincerely grateful. However I would like to go alone at that meeting. I'm certain that everything will go well. It seems to me that I must show Mr. Preece that I can make the presentation by myself or else he might not have any confidence in me. I've always cherished your backing and I wish that you will continue doing so, but the time has come that I must affirm myself.

— Guglielmo, if you only knew how this pleases me!

Of course you may, indeed you must go to this meeting alone. In fact from now on you should pursue your dream alone, because after all it is your dream, not mine. My role is to make life easy for you and to allow you to accomplish your destiny. Though I will not accompany you anymore, I will continue to encourage you in any way possible if you so desire. Now come here in my arms.

Son and mother embrace in perfect complicity.

The headquarters of the British postal service located at Saint Paul's station, is impressive. Inside in a prestigious office, the chief engineer, William Preece, has invited Guglielmo. He comes with two black trunks. William Preece is curious, particularly for scientific novelties.

A civil servant opens the office's door and makes the appropriate introduction:

— Mister Guglielmo Marconi.

Preece invites him to sit.

Guglielmo goes him with the two black leather trunks that he puts down and he extends his hand with firmness.

— It's a pleasure to meet you!

Preece has a formal attitude.

— My colleague Alan Campbell-Swinton told me much good about you. He said that you have made more than anyone else in wireless telegraphy.

Marconi, encouraged by the introduction, says:

— It is a great honor to put on a demonstration for you.

Marconi knows that men like to see things to help them better understand how things work.

Preece answers amicably:

— With pleasure! You speak English very well, Mister Marconi.

Marconi is ill at ease at this flattery that he doubts the sincerity.

— My mother is Irish and she has educated me in large part in English. Every day she would read us a portion of the Saint James Bible in English.

Preece senses Marconi's timidity.

— I see.



William Preece

Marconi brings out some devices from a trunk and he places them on a table in the corner of the room.

He goes to Preece's desk.

— Let us suppose that there is a ship here. Can I put some devices here?

— Of course!

Marconi carefully places some other equipment on the desk. He calibrates them. He places some

sheets in front of Preece.

Marconi says confidently:

— You have in front of you the equipment that can communicate with a ship. Here are the plans as well as my patent.

Preece examines it with attention. A library's silence reigns in the room.

Marconi looks at his host to appreciate his reaction.

— Can I continue with my demonstration?

Preece is thrilled by this scientific experiment.

— Yes please.

— Well, let's go at some distance from here.

—All right.

They take all the equipment and put them back in the trunk.

Preece, his assistants and Marconi go to a rooftop of the eight story of the postal office. Some electrical equipment has already been installed. Preece maintains a distant and objective attitude.

— Mister Marconi, I'm going to the other building on Victoria Street where you have installed your other equipment. In one hour, could you send me the letters GPO⁸ in Morse?

If the electromagnetic waves manage to overcome

⁸ An acronym for Government Post Office.

the obstacles, then you will have achieved a great exploit.

Marconi is a little apprehensive.

— If I believe in my experiments. In Italy the waves should go around the obstacles.⁹

Preece says coolly:

— We shall see!

Mullis stay with Marconi.

Preece hurries to go to the designated place.

Preece arrives on the other roof and waits with impatience while watching his fob watch. When he witnesses the mechanism signal without any hesitation the three letters, Preece bellows with stupefaction:

—My God, he did it!

He returns to meet Marconi on the other roof top

— Young man, you've achieved an exceptional feat; please accept my sincere congratulations!

There are a few moments of silence.

— I've shown you my basic equipment, Marconi says humbly. I've made some much more powerful equipment that I'm trying to improve.

⁹ The frequency of the electromagnetic waves is paramount for their reach. In fact short waves bounce on the stratosphere so they can travel huge distances. That was the essence of Marconi's contribution.

Preece answers with a true admiration:

— I believe that more experimentation is of the essence and must be done shortly. I thank you very much mister Marconi.

They shake hands.

Preece returns to his office.

After Marconi leaves, Preece tells his assistant Mullis:

— Please fetch mister Kemp.

Mullis obeys quickly.

— Yes Sir!

Kemp arrives.

Preece orders:

— Please leave us alone. Mister Kemp, please sit down.

Mullis leaves the room and carefully closes the door.

Kemp respectfully says:

— Yes Sir!

Preece readies to tell him a secret.

— I have just received a young Italian by the name of Guglielmo Marconi. He's an inventor who's developing a means of communication that can become extremely important for Great Britain. I am charging you with the mission to monitor him and to inform me of any new technology that might become important for Great Britain's security.

Kemp is surprised:

— But Sir, I'm an engineer not a spy!

Preece answers with authority:

— I'm asking you to work with him as an engineer, but I would like you to keep an eye on him. Take note of everything that's going on.

Kemp, aware that he must be of service to his country, accepts:

— Very well!

Preece, thoughtful, adds:

— Who knows, Britain's destiny may be in your hands?

Kemp, uncomfortable at the thought of betraying Marconi's confidence replies:

— And it will be in our hands!

Preece brings up his sense of patriotism:

— You've understood me correctly.

Many years before Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, or at least a commercial version of it. He had the vision that people would rather talk to one another rather than writing to each other. He had proposed his invention at the United States Postal Service and to various businesses, that all refused it. Then he approached Preece, the chief scientist of Great Britain's postal office who introduced the telephone to England.

William Preece also helped Guglielmo Marconi to become known in Great Britain.

Realization of a dream

Marconi has attracted the attention of many influential personalities.

Annie says to Guglielmo:

— I have good news for you.

— You do? replies Guglielmo intrigued.

— The Italian ambassador is inviting you to show your invention to the Italian authorities in Rome, Annie says with a smile.

— Finally! Guglielmo answers with relief. I still hope to grant my patents to the Italian government so that I'll be acknowledged. Here's the occasion I've been waiting for.

— So I'll take the appropriate measures when I'll go back to Italy, Annie says with demureness. Your father will be happy to see us again.

— And I to see him again! Guglielmo replies enthused.

He enters the offices of the Ministry of the Italian navy in Rome with his two heavy trunks. He is led to a large office. Some navy officers are waiting and salute him.

— Do I have to salute? Marconi says, perplexed.

— Civil personnel don't have to salute sir, says the officer casually.

— I'm a cadet in the Italian navy, Marconi explains. I was attached to the London embassy.

The officers look at each other.

To avoid the embarrassment an officer responds:

— For you it's different. You don't need to salute.

— Very well then! Marconi says, satisfied. I'll install

my equipment here and I'll be able to communicate with an office on the floor above.

— Perfect, an officer answers.

Marconi installs part of his equipment and he enquires:

— I need an antenna. You must have brooms around here.

— Of course, an officer replies while much intrigued.

— The wires have to be suspended by the brooms, Marconi demands.

The officers order a sailor to raise the broom used as an antenna.

Marconi tells with authority:

— Show me where the other office is.

As soon asked, as soon done.

After having installed everything he transmits the signals in Morse and waits in silence.

Some hurried steps are heard.

The officer is excited:

— I've just received a message:

"Long live Italy."

— Bravo, the other officers applaud.

Marconi smiles proudly, because he's been acclaimed by officers of the Italian navy, his childhood dream. He now belongs to an Italian group, whereas he had long worked alone in the shadows, a little apart from society. He had reached his real goal in life. This sense of belonging is warm in his heart.

If his heart was quenched by the Italians, his purse was filled by the British.

Royal Influence

Annie lives with Guglielmo in London that they now called home. She had sacrificed her married life for the sake of her son's success.

Giuseppe had encouraged Guglielmo to sell his patent rights for 300,000 liras that was a considerable amount. He would have wanted that Guglielmo purchase a property in Italy and become a gentleman farmer as he was. That would have forced Annie to come back with him. This time Marconi doesn't heed to his father's advice because he has no liking of the country lifestyle. Gradually he takes charge of his life.

One day, a royal lackey hands an envelope to Marconi who hastens to read it. He smiles and he turns towards his mother and proudly tells her:

— Mama, I received a request from Queen Victoria to install transmitters that will link the royal yacht to the mainland.

— To be recognized by the royal family of the most powerful country in the world is an incomparable distinction, Annie says with much pride.

— That will surely make a name for me and allow me to establish a company that will finance my research, replies Marconi.

— From now on you won't have any problem with money, I'm convinced of that! Annie says reassuring.

And so the invention obtained its status of nobility but Marconi was dreaming of America where his fame was at its inception.

Winner

Marconi goes to New York that can be considered as the United States metropolis. The America's cup can be considered the oldest sport's trophy in the world and certainly the most famous cup in yachting. The prize is a silver mug awarded to the winner of a competition of nine races between the trophy holder and the challenger. The first prize was won in 1851 to the schooner *America*.

At the end of the first race, Queen Victoria asked:

— Who is the winner?

— It is the *America*.

— Who is second?

— There is never someone in second!

The British, whose motto is *Britain rules the waves*, felt their pride wounded by an American victory. Thomas Lipton, the Scots mogul of tea whose father came from Ireland, has a ship named the *Shamrock*, represented by a four leaf clover said to bring luck. That sailboat had the Royal Ulster Yacht Club banner. The United States were represented by the yacht *Columbia*, property of J.P. Morgan, a rich banker from New York who behaved as if he was the American Federal Bank. On a few occasions he saved the United States from an economic depression. He also financed the US *Steel* company, then the property of Andrew Carnegie and he was the owner of the *White Star Line* that later built the *Titanic*.

The regatta is held in the port of New York and again the British loose.

Marconi says with a great big grin:

— Mister Morgan, your sailboat *Columbia* won against Sir Thomas Lipton's *Shamrock*!

— Yes, I was counting on this victory over the Brits, answers J.P.Morgan.

— I've sent the results to the New York Herald, says Marconi wanting to share this moment of glory.

— These wireless communications are just what we need, replies J.P.Morgan. I'll invest in your company that is the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company* is it not?

— Yes Sir.

— I'll even recommend to others that they invest in your company.

Marconi perceives himself as the real winner of this race. His pockets are lined both by the British and the Americans.

International celebrity

The *Marconi Company* main office is located at Poldhu in Cornwall, at the eastern extremity of England. The building is linked to twenty poles used as supports for a gigantic antenna in the form of fan.

Marconi accompanied by Kemp and another collaborator go to Newfoundland, then a British territory at the east of Canada. They are received in a rustic room at the British governor's home. This territory's governor is rather pompous.

— It is a great honor that you bestow upon us to come to stay in this remote place, the governor says.

— It is a strategic location to communicate with the ships arriving in America, answers Marconi with simplicity.

— Indeed! the governor says to seem obliging. I will make sure that you get all that you will need.

— I would very much appreciate it, honorable governor, replies Politely Marconi. Upon leaving the reception, Kemp remarks in a low voice:

— You didn't reveal your true intentions!

— No, answers Marconi in a hushed voice, I want that our transatlantic transmission be proclaimed with surprise and fanfare.

Marconi had a sense of spectacle that news reporters rejoiced.

He constructs a building on what is now known as Signal Hill.

He's preoccupied.

— Mister Kemp, send a message by cable to the Poldhu station asking them to send the letter S in Morse starting at noon at ten minute intervals.

Kemp answers quickly:

— I'll take care of it.

Marconi and his team attach a wire to a large hydrogen balloon that rises in the sky. Unfortunately the wire breaks. Then they use a kite to raise the wire. Marconi listens to the signal. Finally at around half past noon he hears the sequence of three short bursts.

Marconi becomes anxious.

— Mister Kemp, mister Kemp, do you hear something?

— Yes, I hear it, Kemp answers with surprise.

At every ten minutes they hear the same signals repeat themselves.

Kemp says with admiration:

— You've won your bet mister Marconi you have transmitted a wireless message clear across the Atlantic.

— I was sure of it! Marconi triumphs. This experience shows beyond a doubt that messages can go around the earth's curvature. We can communicate anywhere.

— This demonstration will revolutionize communications, replies Kemp, enthralled.

— Now we will reveal my invention to the whole world, Marconi says contented.

Some knowledgeable scientists had stated that it was impossible. I have shown that they were wrong and that I was right. I take sweet pleasure in announcing it to the press.

The next day the world newspapers talk about this event. With his name.

The brute

Benito's mother, Rosa, is a teacher and she earns most of the family's income. Benito's father, Alessandro Mussolini, is a blacksmith who works occasionally and who drinks and debauches himself regularly. He is a socialist who read Karl Marx' *Capital* and who preaches communism to provoke the people around him because he feels that he is the victim of the bourgeoisie that exploits him.

Rosa tells herself:

"The Lord has given me a burden that I must surmount. There are many women in the same predicament and I share their destiny."

It has to be noted that it was then unthinkable to divorce in Italy. So, by obligation, she tolerated her husband's scandalous doings.

Benito admired his father and found this rebellious and feisty side of his father most alluring. He believed that his mother, apparently very conformist adored her husband's animal instinct.

Since the efforts of Benito's parents to submit him to parental authority were not conclusive, they sent him to a very strict and frugal boarding school that unfortunately had the opposite effect, he became completely uncontrollable. At the schools he attended, he discovered the power of brutality and intimidation that he would use without limit to scare other students. On a few occasions he even wielded a knife to bully students. He was feared

from everyone, even his teachers and his parents. He so was proud of his brutal manners that later on he boasted about having inflicted beatings and having wounded other students

It wasn't surprising that he didn't have any friends, but friendship was not something that he coveted.

He said to himself:

"A friend is useless, other than to betray you. I would rather be feared than liked by people around me because I can dominate them and I don't have to fear being betrayed. It is the feeble that seek to protect themselves with a group. I'm not like that. I fear no one and I'm respected by everyone. They know what to expect when dealing with me."

His sexual education was basic. One day his father went out with his son and showed him a mare. To make things clear, he raised the horse's tail and said: "Look." Then his father brought a stud and excited it so that it would mate. Then he told him:

— This is how a stud sires a female!

When he became seventeen years old Benito regularly visited some brothels to practice what his father taught him. Moreover, the impromptu visits to whores were the only relations that he maintained; the rest of the time he spent reading and daydreaming...

He didn't want to fall in love because he said to himself:

"Love is servility, a thing that I'm not inclined to yearn for. We are either dominating or dominated. Love is for the dominated and lust is for the dominator. I command respect from women who do whatever I tell them. They love a man like me that

knows what he wants and that does what he needs to get it.”

He had an imposing and virile appearance that attracted a large part of the feminine gender.

In 1902, at the Gualtieri School, midway between Mantua and Parma, we are in a classroom. Benito Mussolini, having become a tall good-looking young teacher, speaks with emphasis to his students:

— It’s been only since 1860 that Italy has been united. What type of government do we have, Roberto?

— A kingdom, Roberto answers timidly.

Mussolini, point to another student:

— That’s correct. Who is Cavour, Emilio?

— He’s the founder of the Risorgimento that united the country, proudly answers Emilio.

— And Garibaldi then? Mussolini asks looking ignorant.

— He’s an anti-papist! Emilio jokingly answers.

All the students laugh.

— Garibaldi conquered the Papal States, Mussolini seriously pursues the dialogue, but he wasn’t against the Pope, he was for Italy. Now our country will be able to renew with its former glory as when the Romans were masters of the civilized world. By the way, I was born a little after Garibaldi died.

The students applaud.

— It’s all for today. Be good!

The students raise a raucous and leave.

Responsible lover

It's a nice Sunday morning and the parishioners are going to mass. Mussolini is playing cards at a local café. He looks jovial in his best suit.

When mass ends, he observes people coming out, more precisely he looks at the women. Taking leave from his comrades he slowly meanders in the streets and he mills around the entrance of a park. He knocks at the door of a home. Misses Agnelli is embarrassed from this visit.

— What are you doing here?

— I have to see you, answers Mussolini.

— What would my husband say? misses Agnelli says, worried.

Mussolini pushes the door with insistence.

— Let me in.

— Don't stay there, the neighbors will notice.

He enters and shuts the door behind him.

Misses Agnelli is angry.

— You must go away.

— Veronica, Veronica, I think only of you, Mussolini declares with intensity.

He kisses her and she attempts to resist him.

— I burn for you, I want you, Mussolini says with passion and insistence.

Misses Agnelli tries to push him away:

— Go away!

He squeezes her and kisses her with passion.

— You can't resist me. My will is stronger than yours! I want you.

He kisses her and caresses her and she finally

gives in.

— Benito!

He disrobes her hurriedly with dexterity. She's naked in front of him. Watching her at his mercy, he gets excited. He takes off his pants, and puts out his masculine organ now fully erect.

He lays down his victim on the table and he penetrates her easily because she's ready to receive him. He ejaculates in her.

Mister Agnelli comes in the back of the house, he enters and he surprises his wife having intercourse with Benito Mussolini.

Agnelli is stupefied.

— Veronica!

Misses Agnelli is surprised but mostly humiliated.

— My husband!

Without hesitation, Benito Mussolini beats up the incredulous husband.

Mussolini is satisfied.

— Here that's what you deserve, you cuckold.

Mussolini gets dressed.

— Pig, bastard, you'll regret it, mister Agnelli says wounded and humiliated.

Mussolini leaves.

Agnelli's self-worth is wounded.

— He dishonored me.

He enters the house while removing his belt and he beats his wife while he insults her:

— You whore you let yourself get fucked by that bastard. I'm going to give you a lesson you'll never forget.

Mussolini, already far away thinks to himself:

"Dishonor, I can't dishonor a tramp, because that

what she is. She gives herself to any man that is ready to impose his will. She has no scruples so I have dishonored no one. As for him, he's an idiot for marrying a whore."

At that time there was no efficient means of contraception. Even the Ogino Knauss method predicting ovulation was only discovered in 1930. The interrupted intercourse method certainly did not please Mussolini. The condoms from England were difficult to obtain, especially in a country as puritan as Italy. However Mussolini was not preoccupied by that question.

"It's better to have sex with a married woman because if she has a child it will be up to her husband to take care of it."

Mister Agnelli could not hide the fact that he gave his wife a beating. To defend himself he accused Mussolini of having raped his wife. The villagers didn't want to spread the rumors regarding this incident fearing that the village would get a bad reputation.

Initiation to scandals

In the corridor of the school where Mussolini teaches, someone gives him a note:

“The director of the school wants to see you.”

Benito goes there and knocks at the door, believing that he would be praised for his teaching.

The director tells him in a harsh tone:

— Come in.

Mussolini enters.

The director tells him dryly:

— Close the door.

The director talks in the most official way possible while remembering the memorandum he wrote to prepare the meeting.

— Mister Mussolini, I have to inform you that we no longer require your services. Here is the balance of your salary.

Mussolini is dumbfounded.

— You’re firing me? I don’t understand?

The director is on his guard.

— You’re fired, that’s all!

Mussolini becomes aggressive.

— It’s because of the Agnelli woman isn’t it?

The director feels provoked.

— Obviously. We can’t have teachers that cause scandals. It’s a small village and we must set the example.

— I gave you the example to follow, I took what I wanted! Mussolini says shamelessly.

He drops the sheets and walks away head held high. He thinks:

“In life we have to have the audacity to take what we want!”

Tramp

Having lost his job and knowing that he wouldn't get any good references to teach again, Mussolini wanders.

In Switzerland, he stumbles on a bistro's terrace while observing the clients with disdain.

— Mister, give me your croissant; I'm hungry, he says with a menacing voice.

The client doesn't respond.

— Food belongs to everyone, especially to those who are hungry, says Mussolini in a threatening voice.

The client doesn't move, like a terrorized prey. Mussolini grabs the croissant and takes a bite, while staring at the client.

The client, insulted, gets up and admonishes:

— That's a provocation!

Mussolini doesn't react and goes on eating.

The client sits.

— Karl Marx denounced the social injustices declares Mussolini. Wealth belongs to everyone and the time has come for the people not only to claim its rights, but also to take them.

— You are troubling the clients, the irritated restaurant owner warns. Go away or else I will alert the gendarmes.

— I don't give a damn about your gendarmes, replies Mussolini, as I don't give a damn of all your institutions that exploit the people. I'm not a coward that flees at the least scare.

The restaurateur goes away.

— I'm still hungry, adds Mussolini calmly. You there mister, give me your muffin, he says pointing his finger at another client.

— Here, answers the intimidated client. As a Christian I'm pleased to offer you part of my meal.

— I don't care about your Christian charity, replies Mussolini visibly angry. God doesn't exist and if you're doing that for him, then you're an idiot, a mental patient who should be locked in.

Mussolini eats the muffin. All the clients are on the defensive and dare not leave the premises.

A gendarme comes with the restaurant owner.

— Go away sir, or I will arrest you.

— Why should I leave? This earth belongs to everyone.

— Don't bother the clients or else I will lock you up, orders the gendarme with authority.

— Go to hell, replies Mussolini unaffected.

— You are under arrest. Follow me.

The gendarme puts the handcuffs on Mussolini's wrists.

Mussolini is revolted against authority.

— You're an agent of the decadent bourgeoisie. A day will come when the people will rise up against you.

He's brought to jail where he knows he will eat while waiting for his destiny to unfold.

Mission of his life

In Rome, young Pacelli plays the violin and his sister Elizabeth accompanies him on the mandolin. There is a knock at the door. The guest is led to the living room where Eugenio recognizes the Cardinal and he bows to kiss his hand.

— Monsignor Gaspari!

— Good morning my son!

— Monsignor, Pacelli says with much humility, this unexpected visit is an honor for our family.

— As you have been informed, I've been named under-secretary of extraordinary affairs. Furthermore father Franz Wernz told me that you have done some postdoctoral research in canon law. It happens that I have a need for an assistant in this domain. So, I have taken upon myself to solicit your collaboration.

— Monsignor, I wanted to become a simple pastor to save some souls, Pacelli answers a bit taken aback.

Cardinal Gaspari speaks with kindness and comprehension:

— I understand this devotion, nevertheless the Church is presently in a difficult bind and this work is of a tremendous importance for all souls.

In fact the Pope maintains that he's a prisoner at the Vatican because he feels assaulted by the royalist forces. The Vatican owns only one hundred and eight acres of land in the Italian State and we must carry on the orders of the government. There is a general confrontation with the Catholic Church in all

Europe.

For example let's take Germany. Bismarck because of his Kulturkampf politics is persecuting the Catholic Church. He forbids the priests to teach, the Jesuits have been ousted out of Germany and anyone who opposes it is imprisoned or exiled. The very existence of the Catholic Church is in peril. It must cease to be a political power to become a moral and spiritual force. The canon law is my instrument to achieve that.

— Monsignor, this is beyond my capacities, Pacelli says with profound humility.

— I'm confident that you will be able to overcome this difficulty. You will learn my son because that is your mission.

Passion for work

Marconi had been invited to lunch by the most famous inventor of his time, Thomas Alva Edison, at his home in Glenmont in New Jersey, at one hour train ride from New York City.

Edison and his then wife, Mina, had received a whole slew of famous people, including Orville Wright, the inventor of the plane, Maria Montessori, a revolutionary educator, Charles Lindbergh, who crossed the Atlantic solo, George Eastman, the founder of Kodak, and Henry Ford, the manufacturer of Ford cars and trucks. During his life, he patented 1,093 inventions, of which a large number were improvements on existing products. His most spectacular inventions are the phonograph, the electric bulb and the kinescope that was the precursor of the cinematograph. At that time, Edison had three employees, a cook, a servant and a nurse.

He was absorbed by his research. He worked constantly and he easily forgot holidays and anniversaries. On his wedding day with Mary Stilwell on Christmas of 1871, he went to his laboratory where he stayed to work on a stock ticker, forgetting his 24 years old wife! To do research on his wedding night!

When Marconi met Edison, they perused around the lab and Edison enjoyed commenting everything. — Mister Edison, I came here to meet you because I have a problem and I think that you can help me

solve it.

— Certainly.

— As you well know, I've installed many wireless telegraphy networks that send messages with the Morse code.

— You might not know this but I'm very good at that.

— No I didn't know.

— Yes, yes, I was a telegrapher in Port Huron and in Boston when I was working on my inventions.

— Yes, you invented the phonograph that can listen to human voice. I would like to send and receive messages using the human voice.

— I will help you by explaining the principles used to make the phonograph function.

— I would be most grateful.

— Between us inventors, we must help one another, isn't that right?

Edison teaches Marconi the principles to transform wireless telegraphy into radio.

Marconi was hungry during his stay because he had been invited for lunch. However Edison's explanations were endless because the two men were passionate about their research. Marconi, uncomfortable about his hunger finally said politely:

— I don't want to be rude, but I'm hungry and you invited me for lunch.

— I'll go to the kitchen to find out what is going on. Usually they tell me when it's ready.

He leaves and comes back later shyly.

— I'm sorry but it's Saturday and the personnel has the day off and my wife is away. I forgot. Come with

me I'll prepare a little meal.

They go to the kitchen and Edison rummages in the cupboard and the ice box of the kitchen.

— I'm afraid that there is only some bread and cheese left.

— That will do!

Royal acknowledgement

Marconi's laboratory is full of research equipment where he pursues his ambitions.

Kemp says to Marconi:

— You've received a phone call from Nicolas Tesla, the inventor of the Tesla coil that we use.

— I know, answers Marconi with an air of indifference, Tesla is an engineer who pretends having invented wireless telegraphy before me.

— Here is how you can reach him, Kemp replies.

— It's of no importance.

Marconi is in his lab and he is very busy. A smiling and well dressed visitor enters.

— *Signor* Marconi!

— Marquis Luigi Solari? Marconi answers surprised at seeing his friend after so long. It's an immense pleasure to see you again.

— You have granted Italy a license to use your invention without paying any royalties. It is very generous of you.

— Thank you, Marconi answers, flattered.

— The Italian government has instructed me to install a network of relays for the navy.

— It's a pleasure to help my compatriots and my homeland; previously I offered my invention and my help without any acknowledgement. That disappointed me. At any rate I maintain my offer.

Solari doesn't know how to imitate Marconi's equipment. He tries to pry out of Marconi the

secrets of his invention.

—Honestly *signor* Marconi, Solari says with a sardonic tone, even though I know well your invention, it has some particularities that in practice require supplementary explanations. I am told that the wireless stations you have installed in Corsica for the French government work perfectly.

Marconi feels the uneasiness.

— Even if my patent has not explained everything in detail, I'll help you achieve your project.

— That would be greatly appreciated, Solari says with relief. His Majesty will be most grateful!

Later on Solari and Marconi take the train to go to Piedmont. They are ushered in a royal residence.

— Your Majesty, Solari proclaims with gusto, I present you Guglielmo Marconi.

— It's a pleasure meeting you, Victor Emmanuel III says.

— Your Majesty! Marconi answers.

Victor Emmanuel III, accustomed to these encounters, says:

— *Marquese* Solari has told me much about you. He told me that you helped him build some radio stations for Italy.

— It is an immense pleasure to serve my homeland, assures Marconi contented.

— What will you do now? asks Victor Emmanuel III. Marconi is very happy of the sincere interest coming from such an illustrious person.

— I will shortly go to Newfoundland where I will attempt to send the first trans-Atlantic radio message. With your permission, the first message

will be addressed to you.

Victor Emmanuel III is impressed by Marconi's audacity.

— Very well, I I'm looking forward to it.

— I would have preferred that this event take place in Italy! Sincerely replies Marconi.

— We shall have a ship at your disposal, answers Victor Emmanuel III with magnanimity.

Solari takes advantage of the occasion.

— This could be done using the cruiser Carlo Alberto that has already been used for other experiments.

— That's a magnificent idea! Victor Emmanuel III answers. I wish you a safe trip!

Triumph

In a radio in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, at the eastern extremity of Canada, there are antennas formed as an inverted cone. The snow is abundant. Many men run outside shouting: "Hurrah!" They enter one by one the rustic dining room and they congratulate themselves. When everyone is assembled, Marconi talks to them:

— We've transmitted the first trans-Atlantic message to our station in Poldhu in England.

— Bravo, the team shouts with enthusiasm.

— I'm asking you to keep this success secret for the moment I intend to send official trans-Atlantic radio messages to the king of England and the king of Italy. You'll receive a bonus as soon as this will be completed.

In Buckingham palace in London, preparations are made to receive the first radio message.

— Your Majesty, Lord Knolly says, you have just gotten two from Nova Scotia, one from the Governor and the other from Marconi.

In the Italian king's palace there are similar preparations. General Brusati tells the king:

— Your Majesty, *signor* Marconi sends his homage by trans-Atlantic radio.

— Now, that's good news! Tell him from me that it is a triumph for the glory of Italian science.

The reporters had previously been forewarned and they produce their account quickly and with precision, exalting the triumph. Following this

success he receives innumerable praise by telegrams from a great many persons including Edison.

The spy of society

The Marconis were struck by Giuseppe death. Then Annie moved to London, allowing Marconi to mix and mingle with the British society.

Marconi is now 30 year old. He likes to fish at his friends' place, the Van Raaltes, on the isle of Brownsea. It is there that Baden Powell founded the scout movement in 1907.

During a fishing expedition in 1905, he gets acquainted with Beatrice O'Brien a pretty young Irish 19 year old girl nicknamed Bea. Marconi has many conversations with Bea who is rather indifferent.

Bea's father, Edward Donohue O'Brien, baron of Inchiquin, had bequeathed his castle Dromoland to his son Lucius. Lady Inchiquin, was knowledgeable of British high society and, after the death of her husband she needed money to tend to the needs of her eight daughters and of her son, so she became a gossip columnist for many publications under different pen names. She was acutely sensitive to any plausible and unlikely gossip that was whispered. Her daughters would also play at this social spying and each night would slip under their mother's door a note relating to all juicy rumors that they had reaped during the day.

Marconi offers to drive Lady Inchiquin to London, but she refuses the offer, fearing to become herself the object of gossip; however Bea would have liked to have accompanied such a well-known personality.

Time goes by and Lady Inchiquin organizes a charity ball; Marconi is quick to purchase a ticket in hope of finding the young woman who makes his heart beat faster. This ball attracts an army of partygoers and Marconi has difficulty in finding Bea, but with the help of his friends he manages to do it.

— Good evening Bea, Marconi sweetly says.

— Good evening, she answers with evasive eyes. How nice to see you here!

— I came here especially to find you and talk to you.

— I'm flattered, she responds in a bashful voice.

— In fact, I have something to tell you.

— What do you want to tell me?

— I'm in love with you, Marconi has the audacity of telling her.

— Ah!

She tries to look surprised, but she knows very well that he looks at her with eyes enamored by desire.

— Yes and I'm asking for your hand in marriage, he tells her, putting his right knee on the ground and taking her left hand in his own.

— You're taking me by surprise!

— I don't want to startle you but I'm madly in love with you, he tells her still on his knee.

— I'll need time to think about it. I have to ask the opinion of my sister Lilah.

— I understand!

He gets up and pulls back his hand while continuing his walk.

One week later he's invited by her for tea.

— Guglielmo, I am flattered by your marriage proposal. You are a very handsome man, but I must let you know my feelings. I'm not in love with you

and I must reject your proposal. I'm convinced that you will find a soul partner who will share her life with you.

—I don't know what to say...

Marconi is dumbstruck and his throat is dry.

— I realize that this is a very painful moment for you and I believe that it was better for me to be honest rather than letting you wonder.

— You're very kind, he answers visibly saddened.

Marconi is not the type of man to give up easily. He is certain that he loves her.

One day Misses Van Raaltes invites again Bea to come to Brownsea. She accepts on the condition that Marconi wouldn't be there. Misses Van Raaltes feels that these two young people go well together, so she writes a word to Marconi:

Mister Marconi, I am sorry that Beatrice refused your marriage proposal. I would like to inform you that I have invited her here to my castle where you are most welcome.

Marconi flies there with the wings of Cupid. Bea accepts his presence:

— Guglielmo, you know my feelings towards you, but we can be friends.

The young couple share games and joys and soon Cupid unites their hearts. Marconi, with hope and love again gets down on his knee and asks her:

— Bea, I have never ceased to love you ever since I saw you for the first time. You are the love of my life. I want to make you happy and take care of you. I'd like to share my love and my happiness with you. Beatrice, I ask for your hand in marriage.

— Guglielmo, I will give you my answer in a few days.

— I will wait with impatience!

Bea writes a small note to her mother that she slips under her mother's bedroom door, recalling Marconi's marriage proposal and her intention to accept.

Though Marconi loved Bea sincerely, his true passion was for his invention.

Inventor and promotor of the radio

The Italian war ship, Carlo Alberti, is at quay in Kronstadt, a little west of Saint-Petersburg. The procession of the royal houses of Italy and Russia get on board with pomp and fanfare. The presentations take place and the conversations begin.

An officer of the Italian consulate says:

— *Signor* Marconi, I present you Alexander Popov.

— It's a pleasure to meet you!

— I'm glad to get to know you, Popov answers, truly honored.

Marconi is both surprised and flattered to meet Popov in the Russian delegation.

— I admire the commercialization of your patent, Popov adds. Having heard that you will get married shortly, I give you this samovar¹⁰ as well as this vest made of seal skins.

— I am somewhat embarrassed, answers Marconi ill at ease. Of course I obtained a patent, but I am fully conscious that you are the first inventor of wireless

¹⁰ A water boiler used to prepare tea.

telegraphy. It's for me to tell you of admiration!

— You invented it independently a few months later and you have my admiration especially because you have commercialized it with brio! Popov says with simplicity. As for me, I'm carrying on other experiments. I've heard that you've granted a free license of your invention to your country, Italy, and I commend you for it!

— Thank you Marconi says touched.

— I've recently done a remarkable experiment! Popov adds with enthusiasm.

— What was it? Marconi says intrigued.

— I discovered that metal objects can interfere with radio waves.

— Is that so! Marconi replies, visibly very interested.

— Using electromagnetic waves I detected the presence of metallic objects between the transmitter and the receiver, Popov candidly reveals.

— I'll have to try that! Marconi answers.

— You'll see it's fascinating! Popov says.

Popov returns to his lab while Marconi enjoys his celebrity.

Nobel

1909. In a room of New York's Ritz Hotel a boy delivers a telegram. Marconi is caught by surprise after having read it, as witnessed by Beatrice.

— What is it dear?

— I was awarded the Nobel Prize of physics, Marconi says shocked.

— That's fabulous! Beatrice answers delighted.

However Marconi is disappointed.

— I share it with Karl Brown of Strasbourg, he says to Beatrice, surprised. He's my main competitor; he founded the *Telefunken* Company in Germany.

— But you are the inventor of the radio, Beatrice protests.

— He invented the vacuum tube that's used to make the radio work, Marconi says.

— To invent a vacuum tube is not the same thing as inventing the radio, Beatrice says insulted.

Marconi continues with serenity.

— I'll telegraph mother to give her the good news.

Alfred Nobel was Swedish. His father was an inventor and had 355 patents to his name. At that time there was a demand for construction and explosives were needed. One very important explosive is nitro-glycerin that is very sensitive and consequently very dangerous. Nobel invented dynamite that consists of a mixture of nitro-glycerin with clay, thus making it much more stable. He built dynamite factories across the world, making him a

fortune. He grew up in Russia in Saint-Petersburg where he studied without obtaining a university diploma; he spoke Russian, Swedish, French, English, German and Italian. He studied with well known chemists such as Ascanio Sobrero who had discovered nitro-glycerin.

At first he worked at the family business that manufactured torpedoes. His father did some experiments with nitro-glycerin but he had difficulty in making it explode. Alfred kept on doing experiments and succeeded in making it explode under water. During that time the family invested in oil fields where they made a fortune. He keeps on experimenting in Sweden. He mixed nitro-glycerin with sand and added a detonator. That invention made his fortune and his reputation.

He lived just about everywhere in Europe. He died in San Remo Italy without ever having been married. His parent being rich, he had the problem to give his fortune, so he created a foundation that was to give prizes in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace to people who had helped humanity to progress. The Nobel prizes began in 1901.

It is ironic that Nobel's doctor, Lauder Brunton, had recommended that he take some nitro-glycerin for his heart but that he refused. He would possibly have survived his heart attack had he done so!

Beneficiary

There were many well-dressed dignitaries at Stockholm's Nobel Foundation. Marconi didn't know how he should behave when he would encounter Karl Braun. He didn't dare spot him in the crowd. He was uneasy and his wife sensed it. Beatrice, however, was enraptured to be among such illustrious people. She thought of all the details that she could tell her mother about these important people.

A bearded man separates from the crowd and heads for the couple. Marconi thought that it might be Braun and he feels quite embarrassed. Perceiving his awkwardness, Braun bows his head to salute him:

— Good afternoon, let me present myself, my name is Karl Braun.

— Professor Braun, Marconi says with deference, I'm pleased to meet you. Here is my spouse, Beatrice.

— It's a pleasure to meet you, Beatrice says complacently.

— The Nobel foundation makes us share this prestigious prize, Braun says with humility.

Marconi changes subject in order to retain his self-control.

— It seems that your business *Telefunken* has a sustained growth, especially since you have merged with Siemens.

— Yes, Braun says, listening loosely.

Marconi continues.

— You have completed an automated switchboard that can accommodate 2,500 calls.

— *Signor* Marconi, Braun says while speaking more softly, you should be the sole beneficiary of the Nobel Prize. History must recognize that it is you who made the radio. Please believe that I'm sincerely sorry at the turn of events.

— Professor Braun, I thank you for your testimony. Braun again bows his head with respect.

— Misses.

He leaves, head held high.

The name of Popov was never mentioned in Marconi's acceptance speech.

Royalties

Marconi named Godfrey Isaacs president of the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company*. His brother is Sir Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney general of the Asquith government of the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister is talking to the members of his cabinet:

— Gentlemen, in front of you, you will find the Imperial Schema of wireless telephony. It is a national project that aims to install a telecommunication system across the United Kingdom and on all British ships.

Current communications rely on wire cables that are vulnerable. Moreover, the new means of communication can be installed in places where there are no cables consequently it is of strategic importance to install wireless communications throughout the British Empire. We know that the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company* is very advanced in this field, but we hesitate in giving it the exclusivity of this contract.

After that statement there were talks between the potential suppliers. Godfrey Isaacs submitted a project that proposed to create eighteen communication stations. Again the government representative didn't want to give the monopoly to the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company*.

— The government finds that your project is the least expensive and that your company proposes the most up-to-date scientific equipment, however it

certainly cannot grant you the management of its communications.

— I have a proposition to make you, Godfrey Isaacs says, having foreseen this hesitation. The *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company* will build the stations that will be transferred to the government, in exchange for royalties.

— It would be most unusual for the government to pay royalties. Anyhow we shall see!

That proposition was accepted by the government.

Bad luck and good luck

In 1912, in Southampton, England, the *Titanic* is getting ready to sail on its maiden voyage.

Marconi is in his home in England talking over the phone:

— I thank you very much for inviting me on the *Titanic's* maiden voyage, but I simply cannot go. You've installed my radio equipment aboard the *Titanic*. I am truly sorry but I must take the *Lisutania* that is faster than the *Titanic*, because my assistant, mister Magrini, is always sea sick.

...

— Good bye.

— It's unfortunate that you can't be a part of the *Titanic* first trans-Atlantic crossing as an honored guest! Beatrice says disappointed. Me too I won't be able to go because I must take care of Giulio.

— I wish that I could have been on that cruise because the *White Star Line* installed my most powerful radio on board, Marconi adds. It's bad luck.

The *Titanic* steams towards New York. To impress the dignitaries, the passengers and the reporters, the captain orders to cruise at full speed.

In the radio room of the *Titanic*, the telegraph operator tells the messenger:

— Inform the captain that the cruise ship *Caronia* warns us that there are icebergs in the region.

— I will inform the pilot, answers the messenger with haste.

Similar messages are received from the *Noordam*, the *Baltic* and the *Amerika* and always the telegraph operator asks with apprehension:

— Did you give the message to the captain?

— Of course! the messenger replies.

Satisfied of the answer, the telegraph operator returns to his normal work.

Later he tells the messenger:

— Message from the *California* that there are many icebergs around here.

— I'll return tell the captain, the messenger says anxiously.

The messenger is back.

The telegraph operator says:

— I won't interrupt the transmission of personal messages anymore because the officers all know that there are icebergs.

Later the *Titanic* rubs against an iceberg. The situation is critical and the crew starts evacuating the women and the children.

In the radio room the telegraph operator is on alert:

— SOS, SOS, SOS, this is the *Titanic*.

Our location is 41.44 N 50.24 W.

We've been hit by an iceberg.

Asking for immediate assistance.

The *Titanic* sinks. 1,523 persons drowned and 705 were saved.

Inebriated by success

The news that Marconi's radio saved the lives of the *Titanic's* passengers is talked about everywhere, heightening the prestige of the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company*.

Marconi tells Isaacs:

— Mister Isaacs, ever since you have become president of my company, the value of my capital stock has risen in a spectacular way. It has more than tripled since last year and it has quadrupled since four years. We are rich. Well done!

— Thank you Sir.

In Pisa, there are more and more paved roads. Marconi drives his convertible with Beatrice at his side. He drives fast, inebriated by success.

— How do you like my Bugatti, it's absolutely marvelous?

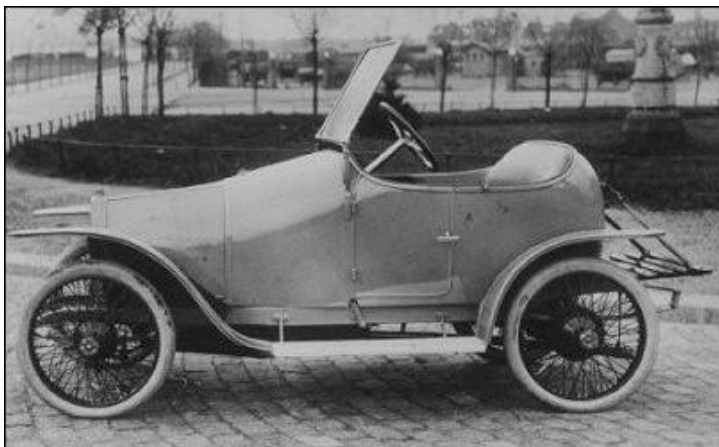
— You're a like a kid with a new toy.

— Why not, life is wonderful and today is magnificent. A British minister stated that seven hundred survivors of the *Titanic* had their lives saved because of my invention.

— You're going too fast!

— On top of that, all ships having more than 50 passengers will have to be equipped with my radio equipment, Marconi says with joy.

— We're going much too fast, are you crazy?



Bugatti, model 22

The car is going at full speed. Beatrice holds on to her hair and she's very uncomfortable. Marconi drives recklessly.

Suddenly they encounter another car and they collide head-on. The two cars are totaled, the occupants are thrown outside the vehicles and they lie near the wrecks. Luckily the cars of that time could not go very fast on the stone pavement. The passengers are unhurt except for Marconi who is bleeding from an eye.

— My God, I just lost an eye!

— I told you so, Beatrice says offended, but you just had to go fast.

People come to their aid and drive him to the hospital. Unfortunately the doctors can't do anything to save his eye.

This incident was only the beginning of his difficulties!

The insiders

Marconi has a bandage on the right eye. He talks to Isaacs:

— An investigative reporter, Wilfred Ramage Lawson, wrote an article that accuses your brother, Godfrey Isaacs, of having profited from his insider knowledge by purchasing some of the company's capital stock when we negotiated with the government to. Is that correct?

— Yes, but there is nothing illegal in that! Information has always been a way to make money. In Venice those who knew which merchant vessels came back to port with their cargo became rich very quickly.

— I'm not talking to you about Venice I'm talking about my company and your brother. Who else got rich this way?

— There are other members of my family and of the government who profited from this information, Isaacs answers.

— Don't you realize that the government will never grant us this contract?

— Do you believe so?

— Don't mock me, Marconi replies admonishingly.

— At least neither you nor I have profited from our insider knowledge.

— Fortunately, but the good name of my company has been soiled! If you had personally been involved in this business, I would have dismissed you and denounced you publicly.

Marconi was well aware that his public image had

been diminished and that he would feel ill at ease in front of the public.

Marriage or death

As for Mussolini, he had no scruples whatsoever. He was dating a young woman named Rachele Guidi. In the modest home of Rachele's mother, Mussolini says with a forced solemn tone:

— Mister, madam, I have the honor of asking for your daughter Rachele's hand in marriage.

Rachele's mother answers:

— You, son of Alessandro, you want to wed my daughter? Don't be ridiculous!

Mussolini looks artificially serious.

— I assure you, I want to marry your daughter. I want her to become my wife.

Rachele's mother says with anger:

— What kind of life will you be able to provide her? You are an anarchist and a small freelance newspaper reporter.

— For the moment yes, but I know how to play the public.

— Be serious, you're not a family man, you're not even stable. You only want to stir up people.

— *Vox populi, vox Dei*.¹¹

¹¹ The people's voice is the voice of God.

Rachele's mother becomes threatening:

— I warn you, Rachele isn't eighteen yet. She'll be so in a year. If you don't leave us alone, I will complain to the authorities and they will throw you in jail.

Mussolini brings out a revolver and he aims it at his temple, to everyone's stupefaction.

— Signora Guidi, this revolver contains six bullets. If Rachele refuses me, there will be one bullet for her and then one for me! Now choose.

Rachele's mother is stunned and she has to give in to this real menace. Her husband holds her in his arms.

— You horrible man, you give us no choice.

Rachele loved him since she was seven years old. She was transported at having been seduced by Benito. She feels an unconditional attraction, a love that is irremediable and unassailable.

A few days later, Mussolini comes back and says to Rachele's sister:

— Pina, I've found an apartment for Rachele. I'd like her to come and live with me to become the mother of my children. Tell her to hurry because I have other things to do.

Pina climbs the stairs to talk to Rachele who says to her:

— I'm going to go with him.

She takes some old shoes, two handkerchiefs, a blouse, an apron and a little money. She joins up with Mussolini who kisses her and they walk seven kilometers under the pouring rain accompanied by a multitude of dogs.

Benito had reserved the best hotel room in Forlì

where she takes a bath and has her clothes dried.

The next day, they go to their apartment. It's located on the second floor, at the end of a dark and narrow corridor where Mussolini placed a bed, a table, two chairs and a coal stove.

— Here is our residence for the time being, he tells her contented. I promise you that one day we will have one of the finest residences in all of Italy.

Rachele did not have any inkling that the prior year in 1914 Mussolini had married Ida Dalser with whom he had one child, Benito Alba Mussolini.

The budgeoning populist

Cesare Battisti is the editor of a popular Italian newspaper, *Il Popolo*, and he's a well-known patriot. He greets unshaven Mussolini. Battisti says with a distant look:

— So young man, you are interested in working for this newspaper?

— Yes, Mussolini answers with conviction.

— Yet you are a certified teacher, Battisti says, skeptical. Can it be that you have something to say to our readers?

— Of course, the common folk have to be educated, Mussolini answers with audacity. They're the victim of the aristocratic class that exploits them and they aren't even aware of it. I want to enlighten them.

— The reality, nothing but the reality?

— Certainly, Mussolini replies with certainty. For example catholic priests are no more, no less than bacteria that serve capitalism. They poison our youths in order to control and manipulate them. This has to be brought out so that the people will realize that the clergy has a grip on them.

— The important aspect is to please people more than to inform them.

— I believe that both have to be done, Mussolini replies a little surprised.

— It is often impossible, replies Battisti, so then what are you going to do?

— We should denounce the abuse of ruling classes, answers Mussolini hesitatingly. I would expose the deviated means that the rulers use to keep their

power over the people.

— When the facts don't exist, we have to create them, Battisti defies him. The people must be pleased at all cost. The way of the people is the way to influence and power.

Mussolini thinks before answering.

— In effect it is fiction.

Battisti remains prudent:

— Be careful! One has to mix facts with fiction. After all it is essential that our readers have confidence in us.

Mussolini says with a cynical smile:

— It is with assurance that we reign!

— Since we agree, I'm hiring you as editor!

— I will talk to the people who will listen with passion to my version of reality.

— Exactly!

Subliminal prayer

In a chapel, Pacelli prays alone, with great fervor, completely unaware of what is going on around him. He is in a state of meditative contemplation. It is a mental elevation that is reached by regular and intensive practice of peace and tranquility. It is an experience that is achieved by forgetting about the body and living solely as a spiritual being. According to him, prayer is the most important tool a Christian can have and ideally life should be but an endless prayer. There are vocal prayers, but there are prayers that are made in silence; they facilitate communication with the spiritual world, the only force that is able to change people's attitude. If the faithful could chase the devilish thoughts of people and to replace them with loving and charitable thoughts the world would become a paradise. That's why Pacelli likes to pray alone, in that peacefulness that unites him with God.

Different vision

The loss of an eye was traumatic for Marconi. He felt that he was punished by God for having been so brash. Of course the physical adaptation took a long time because at first he has difficulty to distinguish light from darkness. After much patience and many moments of despair, the remaining eye completely recovered its vision.

The accident affected his relation with Beatrice. She warned him that he was driving too fast and reproached him not to have listened to her. If he had done so, he wouldn't have lost an eye. Moreover, by that foolishness he also risked his wife's life and she will never forgive him for it. The incident had all of Italy talking and Bea didn't like being the object of public jokes. She didn't have any confidence in him anymore and he had stopped being the prince charming that was the envy of everyone.

As for Marconi he had the sudden reckoning that life was fragile and short lived. The outlook he had on the world and on people had completely changed. His uninterrupted success had just been halted. Existence had become precarious and precious. He had to rejoice to every moment of life, as if he were to die tomorrow. Many people have contemplated this simple notion, but most often it requires a defining moment to accept it.

Bea, the wife who blindly believed in him, starts to denigrate him because from an illustrious inventor

and businessman he has become a hot head who imperiled his own life and that of his wife to get some high sensations.

Marconi meditates on what his life would have been like if he had lost the sight of both eyes. Bea would most likely not have supported him anymore. He would have been engulfed by solitude surrounded by darkness, a horrible outcome.

Ultimatum of respectability

In the office of the editor of *Il Popolo* Mussolini is shaven and has a business suit on. Battisti tells him with restrained pleasure:

— *Signor* Mussolini, you have been doing excellent work for the newspaper, circulation has more than doubled. It's remarkable!

— Thank you very much. I have followed your recommendations and they have brought us success! I know what people want to read and I give them what they want. Truly I have pulse of common folks.

— There is however a problem, Battisti adds a little embarrassed, there is something that can affect your reputation and, if it isn't dealt with, risks causing a scandal.

— What is it?

— Some incredible stories have come to my attention. People are saying that you are staying with your half-sister.

— These are lies. It's the bourgeois class that is spreading ignominious slanders to discredit me. I object.

— Normally I would not take note of these comments; in fact I very well know that you have been in prison for having fired up some mob and coaxed some riots, yet I haven't held it against you. However the current dirt is particularly vicious.

— Even if I don't have to justify my personal life, the woman I am staying with is the daughter of my

father's lover and the muckrakers have made a case of it. There!

— If you want to do deal with the public you must be respectable. There are limits that cannot be breached without being the object of public ridicule.

— Well then Sir, since I haven't retained your respect, I hand over my resignation on the spot.

— That's not what I wanted to say. You only have to adjust your personal life and everything will return to normal!

— Goodbye! I thought that you were above all of this crap on the contrary you are the ass that shoves it!

The world topples

Elsewhere in the world, conflicts were brewing.

The German word “Kaiser” that signifies emperor has the same origin as the word “tsar”; they come from the word “Cesar”, a great symbol of imperialism of ancient Rome. In Germany Kaiser Wilhelm II named a chancellor who would cater to his will and those of the ruling class. He increased his military and naval power in order to challenge Britain.

In 1914, Gavrilo Prinzip of the Black Hand movement that wanted Bosnia’s separation from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire assassinates the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Kaiser Wilhelm II and his chancellor challenge their allies to avenge this assassination. The chain of alliances initiates the First World War and the Germans attack France that is allied with Great Britain and Russia.

We are in the office of the Secretary of the French Foreign Affairs who is meeting his British counterpart, Sir Edward Grey. He is disappointed by Italy’s inertia and he tells the French Minister of the Interior:

— Europe is at war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One could have believed that Italy that was long occupied by Austria would have taken this opportunity to go to war.

— Perhaps it is tired of these quarrels after that long road towards unification? the French Minister of the Interior says.

— If Italy wants to be autonomous, it will have to form some alliances to support her independence. This is a good occasion to do so.

— A little encouragement might be indicated.

— What do you mean?

— Sometimes a catalyst is necessary. Currently Italy is looking inward and it feels vulnerable; it doesn't care much about what is going around it for fear that Austria will take advantage of the situation and invade it again.

— What do you mean by catalyst?

— Well possibly it would be possible to influence Italian public opinion.

— Do you really believe that you can change public opinion?

— Yes, I have good contacts in Italy.

— Let's do it then!

We are now in the office of a businessman. An Edward Grey aide meets with Carlo Sforza, a powerful Italian industrial leader and says to him:

— You are here as a representative of the British government. What may I do for you? Or more exactly what can I do for Great Britain?

Sir Edward Grey's aide says:

— I'd like to get your advice.

Sforza smiles with skepticism.

— You came all the way from London to get my advice! How flattering!

— You are a representative of Italian industry, so your advice is important.

Sforza listens carefully and then replies:

— I don't represent Italian industry.

— It's not exactly what I wanted to say. You aren't the representative of Italy's heavy industry, but you are one of its most influential leaders. In that context you could greatly profit from a war between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Sforza is on the defensive.

— Of course a war would be profitable to Italy's heavy industry, but war is an affair of the state.

— Precisely, I represent not only Britain but also France, Russia and the United-States; Italy's implication in the war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire would be very favorable to us because it would divide the enemy's forces in combat.

Sforza nods his head.

— Assuredly, but that is a question of politics and that is delicate.

— We are looking for a way to sway public opinion. Would you know of someone who could influence public opinion?

Sforza thinks.

— There is the editor of the newspaper *Avanti!* He's named Mussolini. He supports the war even against the official position of the socialist party that wants Italy to remain neutral.

— This is not the time to hesitate. We must stir up the Italians and fire up their will to fight.

— I must warn you that this Mussolini is an opportunist without scruples. I must have your unconditional backing to achieve this kind of exploit.

— You have carte blanche. Italy must go to war against the German Empire the sooner the better.

— I will help you out.

Carlo Sforza subsequently became the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

There is an appropriate saying: "*All is fair in love and war!*"

Catholic canon

There is a war of arms, but there is also a war of words that is slower but often has a more lasting impact.

Cardinal Gaspari is responsible for the revision of the canon law, the law applicable to the clergy. He has been working for many years in silence in the Vatican library along with Monsignor Pacelli.

Common law represents the former decisions that persons of authority have made and that are of public order. In many countries, including the United-States, this kind of law is still in effect. It is everyone's burden to enquire as to the prior jurisprudence.

Various countries such as France, overwhelmed by the sheer number of decisions, have taken upon themselves to codify these decisions to facilitate searches by individuals and lawyers.

The Holy See, or more precisely the Apostolic See, also codified the canon law at the beginning of the 20th century. This process began with the compilation of solemn decision, of councils and canons which mean decisions from ancient Greek.

This enormous and complex task was given to Cardinal Gaspari and to Pacelli who gathered, regrouped, translated, compared, analyzed and synthesized common law; it required the participation of two thousand investigators, and seven hundred bishops. It would take an eternity to finish.

Imported war

Mussolini is in his editor's office where he greets Sforza.

— My secretary tells me that you have an urgent question to discuss, Mussolini asks?

— Quite so. Before delving upon the matter I would like to have your word that this discussion will remain private and confidential.

— You have my word.

— I have much admiration for you. You took charge of a small local newspaper and you doubled its circulation in no time. You have the knack to touch the common people.

— Yes however the socialist party repudiated me for having done so.

— I have a proposition for you. How would you like to publish your own newspaper?

— It would be a considerable challenge!

— A national newspaper would be distributed in all of Italy that could call itself *Il Popolo d'Italia* for example.

— That would require considerable funds.

— The money is available, if you are certain that you can accomplish this task?

— With sufficient funds, I could start publishing in two weeks.

— You're bold maybe you're reckless?

— I'm certain that I can do that, he says with bravado.

— Wait there is a price to be paid.

— Obviously.

- It's urgent that Italy declare war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire. You must preach a veritable crusade to convince the Italians to join the war.
- No problem. I'm convinced of it myself, so I won't have any difficulty in persuading my readers that this is what needs to happen.
- But you are known as a socialist. What will you do to regain your credibility?
- That's the point I will tell them that war is an excellent way to get what they yearn for.
- What if the parliament rebuffs you?
- I will force the king to declare war by his own authority. I will brandish the likelihood of a civil war and the possibility of abolishing monarchy.
- Failure is not an option. You will receive all the money you require and if Italy goes to war, you will continue receiving money!
- Tell me, is it the Italian industrialists who are funding this venture or is it the triple alliance France, Great Britain and Russia?
- They are powerful forces that care about Italy's interest.
- Fine!

An affaire

Some of the time children choose to resemble while others in the contrary to differ completely from their parents. Margheritta Grassini is the daughter of a rich Jewish lawyer who lived in a *palazzo* on the *Gran Canale* of Venice. Margheritta had opted for the rebel alternative. This carefree trait of character gives her a certain charm. She had a good schooling, but at 18 years of age, she elopes and weds a lawyer, Cesare Sarfatti. From then on she takes the name Margheritta Sarfatti. Having family money, she invests some of it in a young promising newspaper editor that is the talk of Italy, Benito Mussolini.

— *Signor* Mussolini, I have heard that you are the owner and editor of the newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia*.

— Yes madam.

— I would like to invest in that newspaper.

— Why?

— I've read some articles and I share your direct and honest opinions. As a matter of fact, I believe in you.

— I see that you are an intelligent woman.

— I would also like to join your newspaper. I know well Italian society and I am a shrewd art critic.

— It will be a pleasure to work together. You can start on Monday.

— Thank you very much.

Time passes and Margheritta is on the job. One day, at the end of the afternoon, she meets Mussolini to talk about her progress.

— Margheritta our readers really enjoy your column.

— Thanks.

— I also like what you are doing.

— Thanks again.

— You have a considerable talent.

He looks at her straight in her eyes and she dared not reply.

He places his hand on her flushed cheek. She freezes.

He comes towards her to kiss her.

— I'm married.

— I know.

He kisses her by force. She resists.

— No.

— I long for you, I want you and I will have you.

He already has an erection that she feels on her thigh.

— No.

— My body claims you.

He takes her behind and he squeezes it.

He kisses her as he can.

She struggles less and less.

He twists her, he grabs her.

She gives in.

He takes her breasts. She holds on to his wrists.

— I want you, I want you, he requests.

She says nothing.

He undresses her. He strokes her naked body.

She's at his mercy.

He undresses himself.

— You have some scars! She says.

— Oh! They're old wounds from duels, fights for honor!

She loves that male.
He put his hands on Margheritta's shoulders.
— Get down on your knees.
She looks at him complying with his will.
He guides her.
She looks at him delighted with enjoyment.
She keeps on going to the rhythm of his hands on her shoulders.
He tenses up.
She moans.
He grunts.
He ejaculates with force. He's exploding like a stallion at copulation.
He's satisfied.
She's pleased at having fulfilled his desires.
She gets up.
— That was good, he says!
They get dressed.
She goes back to her tasks.

The following days she gets into the habit of staying late at his request. She knows what he expects of her and that excites her. She discreetly observes his erection. As usual, he kisses her, grabs her buttocks, squeezes her breasts, undresses her and undresses himself. She gets down on her knees. He does what he likes.

Mussolini feels his virility at its apex, being able to impose his will upon his wife, his mistress and the Italian people. It's a subliminal sensation.

The volunteer and the conscript

Inside the lobby of a New York hotel, Marconi reads a newspaper.

— It's done. The king of Italy has declared war on Austria without consulting the Parliament.

— What will you do? Beatrice asks, worried.

— I'm going to engage myself of course. My homeland is at war and I have to help it.

Marconi was waiting for an opportunity to join the ranks of the Italian navy that was technologically advanced, particularly with its torpedoes.

As for Mussolini, he waits to receive his conscription notice before becoming a soldier in a war he had largely contributed to declare. He is promoted to corporal and he will eventually become a sergeant.

Mussolini and other soldiers are doing some exercises with a grenade thrower. The weapon superheats and explodes. Mussolini covered with wounds is carried to the infirmary on a stretcher.

The doctor wants to cover his mouth with a mask to make him sleep.

— It's to stop you from suffering.

— No, Mussolini says defiantly, I want to feel everything you will be doing.

The doctor begins by removing all fragments. Mussolini clenches his teeth while enjoying feeling the pain.

According to the fascist imagery, he is a hero who was throwing grenades at the Austrians when he was wounded and brought back to be cared for.

The fascists also claim that from that moment on the war turned against Italy.

Certain people say that ridicule doesn't kill, which is certainly the case here.

Prisoner of love

Back in Genoa, Mussolini, the veteran, is occupied as an editor. One day, he enters in his apartment where Rachele is waiting for him, a letter in her hand. He takes it and reads it.

— Rachele, Mussolini says, I got a loan from captain Giuletti who is in charge of the stevedores' union.

— I have something important to tell you, Rachele answers while holding back her anger.

— I'm listening, Mussolini replies, nonchalantly but politely.

— A woman who speaks with an Austrian accent came here to meet you.

Mussolini has a quick mind and he anticipates what is about to happen so he surprises her.

— Undoubtedly it is Ida Dalser. She's a dangerous fanatic.

— So you admit that you know her, Rachele answers, unsettled by this impromptu confession.

Mussolini does not hesitate in confronting the reprimands:

— Of course I know her, once she was my mistress. Now it's finished, I've completely broken up with her.

— She talked to me about her child. She wants some alimony for your son, Gianfranco Norelli, also called Benito Albino Mussolini.

— It's ended between us and I didn't have a son with her, Mussolini replies with arrogance. You know that I only love you!

— I can't accept that you keep a mistress and even less that you would have an illegitimate child.

— Rachele, I told you that this is past and that it is not my child.

— I believe neither one.

— Forgive me my love!

He takes her in his arms and cuddles her.

— I'll forgive you this time.

She also is a prisoner of her love for him and she cannot conceive the loss of her husband who represents everything to her.

Mussolini is furious. He meets Ida Dalser. She is also furious at having been rebuffed and disavowed. Both are vengeful.

— How dare you come here at my home and menace me, me Mussolini? he says with rage. Who do you take yourself for? You're but a whore who wants money. You have no dignity, no self-respect. You come here to bother my wife about your stupidities. You're but a reject of society who uses round about ways to extort money from me.

— It's you who made that child. It's your child and you must take responsibility for it. You can't leave us without any means to survive, because you are the father. I will drag you to court and I will prevail.

— I'll deny everything. I will deny that I ever knew you that I ever made this child and you will be the laughing stock of the press.

— I will denounce you for having conspired with Britain and France to make Italy declare war. I will show the people how you manipulated them. You say that I'm just a prostitute who wants money; well you're a Judas, a traitor who sold his country for money! I will reveal all the secrets you confided to

me and everyone will understand who you really are.
— If you continue I will destroy you. I will use all of my power to break your spine.
— Assume your responsibilities as a father! Pay for the child that you've made!
— All right, I'll pay, but I never want to hear from you ever. Disappear from my life! Vanish forever!
— Give me what is owed to me and you will never hear from me again.
— Disappear!

People didn't have any importance for Mussolini!

Italian comedy

Two policemen knock at Mussolini's residence and one of them asks for Rachele Mussolini:

— Are you Misses Mussolini?

— Yes, Rachele replies a bit intrigued.

— Come with us, you are under arrest.

— But it's impossible! I didn't do anything!

— Come with us we have a warrant for your arrest.

Inside a police station an inspector asks:

— You are Misses Benito Mussolini?

— Yes, Rachele answers on the defensive.

— Then you will be accused.

Rachele is floored.

— What did I do? What am I guilty of?

The inspector is sarcastic.

— You don't remember? Maybe you've had a little too much to drink!

— I never drink any alcohol, answers Rachele, confused.

The inspector snickers.

— Then you were perfectly conscious of what you were doing?

— What was I doing, what are you talking about?

— You have no recollection of having started a fire in a hotel in Milan?

— Not at all, Rachele replies profoundly irritated.

When would I have committed such a crime?

— A week ago, don't you remember?

— It's absolutely ridiculous, Rachele replies outraged. I was at home and it's been months that

I'm there with my mother. I've only gone out to make some purchases. How could I have started a fire in Milan? Why would I have done that?

The inspector smells of an error.

— What is your maiden's name?

— Rachele Guidi.

— You are not Ida Dalser?

— No. She was my husband's mistress.

— I see.

— She's crazy, Benito told me so.

— I'm sorry. You're free.

Mussolini had an explanation for all of his misbehaviors and Rachele believed them all!

The nuncio

In 1918, in the Vatican's Curia, Pacelli is dressed in purple, a cardinal's color. Cardinal Gaspari arrives with the Pope and tells him:

— Thirteen years ago I asked you to join me to rebuild the canon laws. We are now at the term of our work and your participation was crucial.

— Cardinal Gaspari, your direction and your trust were my inspiration, Pacelli replies.

Pope Benedict XV intervenes:

— This codification establishes the new foundation of the catholic religion. You have untangled an incredible mess that will allow the rational organization of the catholic structures. I am very pleased.

Gaspari and Pacelli nod their heads humbly.

The Pope continues:

— Now we have to convince the international community to accept these laws. It is essential that the governments of catholic countries accept this new way of doing things. The clergy can no longer be subservient to the whims and wishes of anyone who act as if they are patrons of the Church.

There is a short silence.

The Pope goes on:

— We can't let Italy govern us. Italy is uneasy with us because they believe that we are a force that can challenge its authority; this situation cannot last forever. On the other hand we must affirm our influence on the world. That's what we are

confronted with.

There is another pause.

The Pope explains:

— This World War is the work of the devil that has unleashed killings between the largest catholic countries in the world. From the beginning we have sought to re-establish peace. To that end Cardinal Aversa was recently named Nuncio to the German government, but God has claimed him to his side. May he rest in peace!

There is an even longer silence.

The pope looks at Pacelli

— Monsignor Pacelli, you have revealed yourself to be a shrewd negotiator in allowing the Red Cross the exchange of sixty thousand prisoners. You are familiar with the German language and the policies of the Holy See. I name you Nuncio in Munich, in place of Cardinal Aversa.

Monsignor Pacelli prostrates.

— Holy Father!

Faith in himself

Monsignor Pacelli has the mission to negotiate peace and end the war. He's the Pope's representative and he behaves as such. He reserved two compartments on a train leaving for Munich. There is one for himself personally and there is another one to stock up on foodstuff from Zurich that will enable him to follow his particular eating habits even in wartime.

At the train station a car with the papal insignia drives him to the Munich nunciature.

Three days later, a horse carriage takes him to the royal palace where he is presented to the king of Bavaria, Ludwig III.

One month later his car drives him to the station and he takes the train to Berlin.

At the German chancellery the chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg tells him:

— Monsignor Pacelli, Germany wants to end this horrible war that we did not provoke. Since December we want to open a dialogue with our enemies but that is perceived as a sign of weakness and not as a sincere wish to end this awful carnage, even though our forces are invincible.

— Mister chancellor, speaking on behalf of the Holy See it is with satisfaction that I support an initiative that will promote peace in the world.

A sumptuous royal train takes Pacelli to the Kaiser's quarters.

The Kaiser is sitting at a desk in an austere room, a

hand on his sword.

There is a phone on the desk and some military maps hang on the wall. The Kaiser wears the Iron Cross on his chest. Pacelli reads the Pope's letter:

— Sire, I am troubled by the prolongation of this terrible war. Monsignor Pacelli is my representative and he shares my vision and my hopes. I beseech you to discuss with him of the possibility to end this war started by the forces of evil.

Kaiser Wilhelm answers in a fanatical way:

— I have not started this war. It is England that seeks our destruction. She wants that I get down on my knees before her, that I would submit to her orders and that my people suffer and die for her own glory. She uses violence to intimidate me but the German people have shown their determination. We will not yield to this pressure. We are the stronger ones. Our people can vanquish all the sufferings inflicted by England and its allies. The German people have an unparalleled strength and determination. They can weather the worst mistreatments. However I would like to put a term to this suffering. England should cease to impose its will on all the peoples of earth. I want to end this inhuman war. In December I made some attempts to finish with this conflict, but the Holy Father did not mention this fact. Do you know how much this turn of events preoccupies me? It is I who has initiated the peace negotiations. I am a peaceful soul who has been dragged in a maelstrom of history. Now the mobs want to eliminate royalty. The socialists would like to revolt against imperial power that is the very source of our empire's greatness. It is essential

that the Catholics pray for peace so that we form a common front to obtain it. We must appease the warmongers.

I deplore the Italian king's treacherousness who declared war on us without provocation. Italy had no alliance and so she did not have any reason to enter the war. She only profited from the situation.

It is the English that feed on the war; without her, the Russians would lack all financial resources required to fight against us.

As for Belgium, that country squeezed between Germany and France? I give her all my solicitude because she had nothing to do with this war.

— Your Majesty, in the name of the Holy Father and following your promise, the deportation of the Belgians must be stopped.

Kaiser Wilhelm lets out a laconic reply.

— I'll see to it.

Next the Kaiser receives Pacelli who sits at his right and Cardinal Schioppa at his left.

Kaiser Wilhelm announces:

— I've killed a deer that will be served for dinner.

— I noticed that you are an excellent hunter, Schioppa replies with admiration, if I count the numerous stuffed animals that adorn the walls of your hunting pavilion

— Hunting is tradition of the German nobility.

— Have you ever hunted with the king of Italy? Pacelli asks in a jovial tone.

— No. I don't know him well. In fact I tried to get in touch with him to talk about peace but I was unable to do so.

Pacelli nearly interrupts the Kaiser

— The intervention of the Holy Father would not be useful to begin proceedings because there is no relation between him and the kingdom of Italy. An intervention originating from the Holy See would be perceived as being interference.

— Is that so! Kaiser Wilhelm says, surprised.

— The Holy See cannot act alone because it is part of the kingdom of Italy, Pacelli says disappointed. Obviously if it was a separate entity from Italy, it could have much more influence.

— It is not a handful of Swiss guards that will make anyone tremble! Kaiser Wilhelm replies facetiously. I recognize that the Holy See is in a delicate situation. It should have its own territory with an opening on the sea.

— However the Holy See ardently seeks peace, Pacelli perseveres.

— Regardless of political considerations, regardless of the crowd's anger and regardless the dangers, the Pope should engage peace negotiations. Pacelli's eyes sparkle.

— You are right. It is the Pope's responsibility; he must act, peace is in his hands.

The First World War ended with German capitulation.

A peace that sparks a war

Georges Clémenceau for France, David Lloyd George for Great Britain, Vittorio Orlando for Italy and Thomas Wilson For the United States gather at the Peace Conference in Paris; their assistants attend in backrooms including Marconi who is Orlando's assistant; John Maynard Keynes, a British economist is David Lloyd George' advisor. Marconi now has a glass eye and he talks with Keynes.

— Mister Keynes your reputation as an economist precedes you.

— And yours as an inventor mister Marconi.

— Neither the Russians nor the Austrians are represented at this peace conference, Marconi says with a little naïveté.

— The Russians are amidst a full revolution and the victors of the war will certainly not negotiate with anarchist communists! Keynes answers a little haughtily.

— The French demand an enormous compensation because they've suffered a lot.

— I believe that they want to be avenged and I dare say that they will succeed! In my opinion this vengeful attitude is dangerous.

— Clémenceau uses every means to humiliate the Austrians.

Keynes chuckles.

— Monsieur Clémenceau doesn't show much clemency!

— A little Christian charity would have been

appropriate.

Keynes becomes sarcastic.

— They disdain the Austrians and they savor their unconditional victory.

— I cannot be comfortable in this political universe. They are acting as animals that are sharing a carcass.

Orlando rushes out of the conference room and heads for Marconi.

— They only talk in English and I don't understand a word. They talk to one another without ever noticing me.

During the discussions, it was agreed that France would take back Alsace and Lorraine that they would share the African colonies and that Poland would receive the Danzig corridor. As for Italy, she will receive nothing. Yet the Italians were vying for the port of Fiume and Dalmatia.

That's why Orlando fulminates.

— Let's go, we have nothing else to do here!

Italy was outraged by the outcome that she deems unfair.

Finally captain

In the port of Leith in Scotland there is a vessel called the "Rovenska" with a sign "For sale, Ramage & Ferguson, Scotland ", the remnant of the after-war. Marconi admires it as if it were the nicest thing he had ever seen. The ship-owner notices Marconi's bedazzled admiration that he translates into money. He says with a smile:

— She's a nice ship isn't she?

— Yes she is! When I was fourteen years old I applied to the Italian naval academy in Livorno and ever since I dreamt of being the captain of a ship.

— You have the opportunity of becoming master of this magnificent vessel of seventy meters and of seven hundred tons. It was built before the war for the Austrian archduchess and it was requisitioned during the war.

— Is that right! How many sailors are required to man her?

— About ten. We can refurbish her to her ancient glory if you so wish. Inside there is a luxurious masters' chamber, three guest rooms with their attending rest room, an oak study, a dining room and a living room.

Marconi is visibly in love with this yacht.

— A laboratory would have to be built.

— With pleasure. Provide us with your specifications and we will make it.

This ship will become the greatest love of his life. It is strange that some humans can become enamored by things more than by people!

Men of honour

Mussolini isn't comfortable in a room where artists meet. He'd like to talk to the well-known poet D'Annunzio, so he listens to the small talk. The poet declares with panache:

— Art and war require audacity. It is with boldness that I have denounced the decadence of the establishment in my literary works. And it is in the same way that I have won my aerial combats when I was fighting for Italy. Obviously there are risks in life and the loss of one eye testifies to this, but one has to dare to live fully.

— You are the famous Gabriele d'Annunzio if I'm not mistaken? Mussolini says.

— Yes. To whom do I have the honor of speaking? Mussolini smiles with charm.

— Benito Mussolini. I am the editor in chief of the newspaper *Popolo d'Italia*.

— I like that newspaper. Do you want to write an article on me?

Mussolini is glad of this opportunity.

— Yes, everyone is interested in you. After all, not only are you a writer of dramas, a poet and a war hero, but on top of that you're interested in politics. D'Annunzio is filled by his importance.

— My dear Mussolini, we have won the war and we have lost the town of Fiume. Neither arms nor words have been useful to spare us from this disgrace.

— I also have the conviction that we have fought to no avail.

— It is revolting at having been treated in such a

way. In olden days, when the Roman legions marched in the towns and countries of the empire, we were respected. Now we are laughed at and ridiculed. We must seize what is owed to us.

— You are a man of action who knows what he wants and who goes for it.

— So there!

A few weeks later, D'Annunzio hustles a group of soldiers wearing black shirts.

— Italian soldiers stand up to free the port of Fiume that belongs by right to Italy but that politicians didn't have the courage to claim. Let us do what they didn't dare do! Let us march for our rights and for glory!

The soldiers shout in agreement.

Later D'Annunzio enters the port of Fiume at the head of his soldiers without encountering any resistance and he announces triumphantly:

— The town is ours. Soon the whole of Italy will fight against tyranny and injustice.

A few days later, Mussolini stirs up a crowd of men:

— Italians! Our country needs people like you to re-establish order. The anarchists want to destroy our homeland. The socialists are ruining the very foundation of our society. We must unite to safeguard our values. Let us join together in combat fascicles. During the reign of the Roman Empire officials carried fascicles in front of the magistrates. They used them to punish the culprits. Italians, let us unite in fascicles and form combat squads to preserve national unity won by Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour.

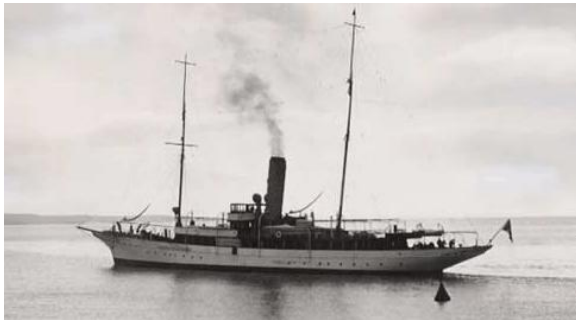
The men shout with enthusiasm.

Marriage adrift

The postwar jubilation touches everyone. Marconi's newly renovated ship is at quay. There's a social gathering on the main deck. Marconi, enthralled, speaks to a young woman.

— How do you like my ship Betty?

— It's beautiful and big.



The ship Elettra

— Yes! This steamship yacht was constructed for Austria's Archduchess. Maria Theresa, but during the war it was converted to a mine sweeper for the British navy. After the war I bought it and I had my laboratory installed in it.

— Where does the name *Elettra* come from?

— It's simply a name of Greek origin that I like. She's like the Greek goddess of electricity.

I very much enjoy living here on the ship.

— What does your spouse say?

— We don't get along anymore. We are living as

friends. I don't love her but she'll always remain the mother of my girls.

— It's sad to live that way.

— We keep appearances for the sake of high society.

Beatrice notices them and, wounded, she goes back to her cabin. Marconi sees her but doesn't really care. He takes Betty in his arms.

— What will your wife say?

— She saw us and she went to her cabin.

— I'm not at ease.

— My wife and I have no more physical contacts.

— You don't kiss her?

— For appearances sake only. It's difficult for me to live without any affection or love.

— You must have some feelings for her?

— No, not at all.

Marconi in a corridor on the *Elettra* and he tries to enter the cabin but the door is locked. He knocks.

— Beatrice, let me in.

— Go away, Beatrice replies, sobbing.

— Beatrice, I want to talk to you.

— Leave me alone.

Marconi goes away.

There is a silence.

Marconi comes back accompanied by a servant.

Marconi says embarrassingly:

— Open the door, my wife isn't well.

The servant obeys and then leaves. Marconi enters and then shuts the door behind him.

— How dare you bring that woman on our ship?

Beatrice castigates him.

— But she's only a friend!

Beatrice becomes furious:

— A friend! A friend! She's your mistress. Everybody knows it. And you bring her on board! You're disgusting.

You make people believe that you are amiable and distinguished but in reality you are but a vile coward without any class. How can you humiliate me in this way? Go away! Get out of my cabin and don't ever come back.

Marconi leaves stunned.

Faith, God's weapon

In Munich a Communist troop is wandering in the streets. Soon the men are in front of the nunciature where Pacelli's limousine is parked. Inside Sister Pascalina helps Pacelli who is indifferent. Outside, a crowd approaches and enters the court. Two armed revolutionaries knock at the door and they are let in. Pacelli hears the raucous and goes to the entrance where an aggressive man orders:

— We are requisitioning the limousine for the people. It's splendid, especially with the papal insignia!

— It is out of the question that you take the limousine, replies Pacelli calmly. Your intrusion here is illegal and your requisition of the limousine is against international laws of all civilized countries.

— Comrades, take some grenades. Talking is pointless, we are taking this limousine.

An accomplice points a rifle on Pacelli who grabs his crucifix that is hanging on his chest as he faces his aggressors. Silence reigns. They dare not confront this priest who defies them with a simple crucifix and his convictions. The revolutionaries are shaken and lose their sense of reality.

— Comrades leave them alone.

They leave the nunciature empty-handed.

A noise is heard and the revolutionaries fire some gun bursts towards the third floor of the nunciature.

The researcher

Marconi is in his lab on the *Elettra* that sails in the English Channel near a radio emitting station. Between the seaside and the ship, a large steamship crosses path.

— Mister Kemp, have you noticed that the radio signal was disrupted when the steamship passed between us and the emitting station?

— Yes, you're right, but I didn't make the relation.

— We should do more tests on this aspect that Popov described to me.

— You believe that this steamship interfered with the radio waves? What a pity!

— Obviously I don't particularly appreciate the interference with radio waves, but that may become important. I must make a note of it.

— Your financiers might not like to know that the radio waves are not perfectly reliable!

— It is a scientific fact. We have to examine everything.

A few months later, Marconi goes to the *American Institute for Electrical Engineers* in New York, where he pronounces s speech:

— It seems to me that it would be possible to manufacture a device that would send radio waves in a given direction and that these waves would bounce back on metallic objects such as ships. The returning waves would then be detected by a

receiving station, thereby revealing the presence of ships without these ships having emitted any radio waves.

The tribune and the tribe

Mussolini gives a speech to the crowd:

— Dear voters, I'm asking you to elect me to represent you in the Parliament because I know what you need. We must end the disorder that flirts with anarchy. The government doesn't feel the vigor and the grandeur of the patriotic heroism that motivate the people. The Prime Minister wants to mobilize the people and provoke a general strike to protest against the seizure of Fiume by the black shirts. The socialists want a revolution like the Russian Bolsheviks who aim at destroying all fundamental values of society. They don't want to work, they don't want an army and they want to be gone with religion.

I offer unity, pride and the fascist force.

The crowd agrees.

The next day Mussolini is comfortably sitting in a chic restaurant where he is talking to a businessman who says:

— Europe is in full swing right now. It wants to do away with this terrible war while its economy is in full growth.

— And Italy didn't get its fair share, Mussolini replies. Though it produces racing cars such as the Bugatti and the world listens to Marconi's radio, its economy is faltering. The workers want to take power and our democracy is wavering. The Austrian and Russian empires have been dismantled and the

socialists want to benefit from this trend and seize power. Italy needs a strong man to counter these forces. Italy needs me.

— You're quite correct. We will back you and be assured that we will provide all necessary funds to put the unions in check and to deal with the trouble makers.

— Italy must regain its ancient glory. The government must encourage Italian industries that will bring it prosperity.

— Italy needs to bring back the traditional values and I am certain that you are the man to bring this about!

The money granted by the industrials to the fascists facilitates Mussolini's accession to a seat in the opposition in Parliament. He is voted in by acclamation.

Patriots

A white ship emerges from the horizon, it's the *Elettra*. Marconi is on its deck. The ship approaches the port of Fiume. D'Annunzio is on a platform on shore where he addresses the people that have gathered:

— Citizens, legionnaires! Let us welcome Guglielmo Marconi, the Italian genius who opened the way to a new world of communication!



Gabriele D'Annunzio

The ship docks and D'Annunzio embraces Marconi.

— It's an honor to get to know you, Marconi says with humility.

- Well then let us share the honors.
- I have come here at the request of Italy Prime Minister.
- Nitti sent you?
- Yes, I'm his representative.
- D'Annunzio is visibly flattered yet on the defensive.
- I suppose that he'd like me to leave Fiume?
- D'Annunzio says with a firmer tone.
- Yes, he wants to avoid international problems.
- If Mussolini had been in power, he wouldn't have acted as a coward.
- Nitti fears of a local civil war.
- Italy is run by politicians without balls. Like me Mussolini fought for Italy, he wouldn't care about a local insurrection.
- I believe that they will force you to leave.
- I can't nor do I want to fight against the Italian army.

In front of the building of the newspaper *Popolo d'Italia*, Marconi descends from his limousine and enters. Mussolini welcomes him in his office.

Mussolini turns on the charm.

- How is it going, *Signor Marconi*?
- Presently everything is fine. I still have some difficulty in getting accustomed with my artificial eye. And it isn't going well with my wife. We live separately from each other.
- Ah women!
- Divorce is out of the question. After all, divorce is not possible in Italy.
- When we want something we always find a way to accomplish it.

— Civil divorce is not permitted and catholic divorce is impossible.

— I know that you went as an emissary to see our illustrious poet Gabriele D'Annunzio in Fiume. Did you know that divorce is legal there? You should get informed.

— I didn't know.

— Well then, perhaps I have been helpful to you? What is the purpose of this friendly chat?

— I've decided to become a fascist. Since you are in charge, I came to see you. I would like to contribute some money to your party. You see, since the Italian government has disavowed Gabriele D'Annunzio and it has convinced him to abandon Fiume. I've thought about the situation. I'm profoundly Italian though my mother was of Irish stock. I've served my country as an officer during the Great War and afterwards as a diplomat during the talks leading to the Treaty of Versailles. I have even served as a government messenger in Fiume. Since I'm not satisfied with these participations, I have decided to commit myself politically.

— It's most admirable of you!

— I have good contacts with the Italian royal family and I'd like to prove to them my support not only by words but also by deeds. The fascist party promotes the fundamental Italian values including the respect of established order. Since the collapse of the Russian royal family by the Bolsheviks, chaos threatens the European monarchies. I want to contribute to those who vigorously combat for the king of Italy.

— *Signor* Marconi, you are a real patriot. You are an

Italian with enormous prestige; your participation in our movement will be much appreciated

— Thank you!

— I have a favor to ask you.

— What is it?

— Feel free to refuse.

— What would you like?

— Would you make public speeches to publicize our cause?

— Of course, when it will be possible.

— I knew that I could count on you. In return be assured that you can count on the fascist party.

— The business is thus concluded.

He shakes hand with Mussolini who squeezes it warmly. Marconi is overwhelmed by this encounter.

Inside a presbytery a Sister accompanies Marconi in an office. A Jesuit father receives him.

— It's nice to see you again!

— Hello father, Marconi answers timidly.

The Jesuit father senses Marconi's embarrassment.

— It's very difficult for me to talk to you, Marconi continues.

The Jesuit father tries to be comforting.

— I am held to the ecclesiastic secret. You can talk to me in all candour.

Marconi hesitates.

— I came to see you because you have blessed my marriage. I fear that this union has become a total failure.

— The Catholic faith doesn't permit divorce, you know that, the Jesuit priest firmly says. Marriage is a solemn institution that cannot be broken by men.

You will have to resolve your difficulties with your wife. I offer to help you in any way I can.

Marconi is still hesitant.

— I got married in the Catholic Church however my mother educated me according to the protestant Wesleyan faith.

The Jesuit father is surprised.

— I wasn't aware of that!

Marconi remains candid.

— I didn't try to mislead you during the marriage. I then believed that it was of no consequence.

— You should have informed me!

— I am sincerely sorry father, Marconi says with a repentant voice.

The Jesuit reflects upon the situation.

— I'll see what I can do.

— I thank you father.

Next who would have guessed that Pacelli would have problems with women?

Intrigues and confidences

Elisabetta, Pacelli sister, is led by Sister Pascalina to her brother's office. She turns and makes sure that the door is locked.

— What is it my dear Elisabetta?

— I have great concerns to discuss in private with you.

— What on earth could be so mysterious coming from you my dear sister?

— Eugenio, are you aware of all the gossip that is being spread concerning you?

— What gossip could there be?

— Concerning Sister Pascalina, whispers Elisabetta.

— Gossip concerning Sister Pascalina? Pacelli answers amused.

— Don't talk so loud that she could hear, Elisabetta admonishes.

Pacelli plays the game and whispers.

— Listen to what?

— That is really you, Elisabetta says seriously. You are only concerned with your work. Open your eyes!

Pacelli goes on playing.

— Will you tell me what is going on?



Sister Pascalina

- You really have no idea of what I'm talking about?
- I haven't the slightest idea, Pacelli replies jokingly.
- Promise me not to involve me in any way.
- I promise I'll be discreet.
- As in the confessional?
- As in the confessional!
- Well then, people are saying that Sister Pascalina and you have had intimate relations.
- Intimate?
- Very intimate!
- That's absolutely ridiculous, who can believe such stories?
- Gossip sometimes does much harm!
- But they are totally without any basis!
- People like to blabber all kinds of dirt. And they often believe it.
- Since they're falsehoods, one needs not be overly concerned.
- These are not casual stories these are horrible

lies that tarnish your reputation. So there!
Pacelli suddenly realizes the danger.
— I'll take care of it. I thank you for having confided
in me your concerns Elisabetta!

While Pacelli is the object of falsehoods, Mussolini
has no scruples in seducing any married woman
and in slandering any dissenting reporter.

Pleadings against the economic punishment

In the Vatican, Pie XI talks to Pacelli.

— Monsignor Pacelli, it would seem that you are preparing an article to be published in the *Osservatore Romano*?

— Yes your Holiness. As the Bavarian nuncio I must tend to the wellbeing of the faithful I represent. In the Versailles Treaty the Allies demanded exacting reparations from Germany. The Germans who were themselves coming out of a costly war were incapable of paying this heavy burden. In order to free itself from this financial burden the German government had the bad idea to print money and to reimburse its debts in that fashion. Obviously with this money the Allies wanted to purchase goods and services that the Germans were unable to provide thereby creating an infernal inflation. Its economy collapsed. The prices increased tenfold in a very short lapse of time. I denounce the Allies' attitude who attempted to take advantage of this situation. Additionally I disapprove of the French occupation of the Ruhr. These are grave irritants that can only worsened the German's fate and that will sooner or later provoke unfortunate consequences.

— Do you think that they will listen to you? Don't you think that you are preaching in the desert?

— Of course our readers will listen to the message of Christian charity that I'm sending but I would be more than surprised if it has any effect; at any rate I

must protest against the economic punishment that the Treaty of Versailles has imposed on the German people. It is a penitence that the German people should not have to suffer and it is a penitence that cannot lead to repentance because it was not the German people who were responsible for the war. France wants a pound of flesh as vengeance and that is not a Christian value. She should have pardoned the Germans and let God take care of Justice.

— The devil disguises itself in many forms. Your preoccupation with the German people will certainly help in concluding a concordat with Bavaria.

— My goal is to have compassion with the faithful I represent. This article is not at all meant to soften the Bavarian authorities in my dealings with them.

— I didn't want to make such an insinuation! By the way, how are the negotiations going?

— In accord with the canon laws reform that I participated in, certain aspects had to be recognized by sovereign governments. We are starting this reform with Bavaria to make that government accept not to make any further nominations and promotions in the clergy, that it allow the establishment of Catholic schools and that it recognize our existence and our laws.

— The concordat is imminent it seems?

— Yes Holiness, but we shall have to continue this process with Prussia and Germany where a large number of inhabitants are Catholic.

— Undoubtedly! In reaction to your pleadings against misery in Germany, people will certainly say that you have an affinity towards the Germans.

— I must denounce this flagrant injustice and I cannot and I will not try to please everyone!

To each his hobby

Mussolini is alone with Marconi and asks him:

— *Signor* Marconi, you are a prudent person.

— Thank you!

— You are also a noble person.

— Thank you again.

— I have a favour to ask. I must fight in a duel. I criticized an airhead in my newspaper and he feels insulted and so he is seeking reparation. However, the authorities want to stop this noble activity. It is a question of honor for my adversary Francesco Cicotti as well as for me. I'm looking for a safe place where we could fix this dispute between men.

— I have a villa in Livorno where you could fight your duel in peace.

— I thank you.

— Good luck for your duel.

— I'm used to it you know! For me it's a hobby.

Enquisitory

The Dominican Fathers are the inquisitors of the faith who also seek satisfaction. Two Dominicans present themselves at the nunciature. They enter and ask to speak to Sister Pascalina.

— We have been sent by the Vatican to get some information on the nunciature. We have a few questions to ask you. Your name is Pascalina, born Josephine Lehnert?

Pascalina shows no emotion.

— Yes. I am German. I was born in Bavaria.

— You were a teacher in a village.

— Yes and they asked me to be a trainee in housekeeping at the nunciature.

— You then took charge of the nunciature's management?

— Someone had to take charge and I did it because nobody else did it.

— You also act as the nuncio's secretary, Monsignor Pacelli?

— Monsignor Pacelli tells me his needs and I take it upon myself to satisfy his needs.

— Monsignor Pacelli is very close to you. You are sort of his confidant?

— Sometimes Monsignor Pacelli talks about his preoccupations, but I wouldn't go as far as saying that I am his confidant.

— Do you work late at night with him?

— I do as he wishes. I am always available for him.

— Does he touch you?

Pascalina hesitates because of the audacity of that

question.

— We have sometimes touched.

— Did he ever take you by the hand?

— No.

— Did he ever touch you affectionately?

— No.

— Do you love him?

— I love our Lord Jesus Christ and I like monsignor Pacelli.

— Do you have anything to say concerning your relation with him?

— Monsignor Pacelli is very good to me and to everyone else. I believe that he appreciates my work. As for me, I have a great respect for him!

— Thank you. May God bless you!

Meanwhile the black shirts have a dark plan.

Coup d'état

We are in 1922 in Naples, where there is a gathering of turbulent men. Mussolini speaks to them with passion and fire:

— Fascists, we are gaining in force and in popularity from day to day. We represent the aspirations of the Italians. We have the vision of the future that our compatriots want. We are the future. We are Italy.

Yesterday some reporters asked me if I wanted to participate in a coalition. This is out of the question because that would lead to an inefficient government and we must do away with those.

There is a general applause.

— Fascists, if the authorities don't offer us the chance to govern, we'll march on Rome and we will grab the throat of this political class that rules us.

The crowd gets up and chants "Mussolini".

Worried businessmen meet Mussolini in Milan.

— Can you tell us exactly what you want?

— I know that you have to be informed of what is going on, Mussolini says with calm and force. Don't worry! Certain persons have damaged some businesses however these are but unfortunate local incidents. We fascists promote order and prosperity. We'd have a balanced budget, a small bureaucracy that will not impede you, a strong currency and a smaller inflation. Our interests are the same as yours!

The businessmen applaud.

In the streets of Milan the fascists blockade their offices.

In Rome, in the royal palace where the king is surrounded by the members of his cabinet, the president of the cabinet says:

— Your Majesty, anarchy is knocking at your door. Some insurrections have begun in Milan and Naples.

— What do you suggest? Victor Emmanuel III asks, visibly concerned.

— We must declare a state of emergency and impose martial law, says the president of the cabinet with a semblance of audacity.

— I don't believe that the situation is quite that critical, Victor Emmanuel III says with hesitation.

— The situation is intolerable. The fascists impede the government's functioning.

— But if I impose martial law, Victor Emmanuel III says with hesitation, it would risk a confrontation. I don't want to have Italian blood on my hands!

The President of the cabinet is scared:

— Your Majesty, if we do nothing it will be our blood that will be shed.

— Agreed, I will accede to your demands, though it's against my gut feelings.

In the prefecture in Milan, where the fascists face the prefect, Mussolini, declares with absolute confidence:

— As the representatives of the people we seek your collaboration.

— What do you want me to do? the intimidated

prefect answers.

— Do nothing.

— And what would that give me?

— You could be part of the next government.

There is a prolonged silence.

In the royal palace, a councilor enters the king's office. He whispers:

— Your Majesty, the fascist forces are more numerous than the armed forces

— Really!

In Mussolini's office, a fascist tastes the victory.

— The king has just named Mussolini Prime Minister. Bravo, we won!

Il Duce declares with arrogance:

— No, it is not the king who granted me this role, it is the people.

First, the black shirts must trash the offices of adverse newspapers so that they do not print false news.

An exuberant fascist says:

— I'll take care of it.

Il Duce¹² imagines his triumphal entrance.

¹² Il Duce signifies The Chief in Italian.

— Bring me a horse. I have to look like a conqueror, like a new Cesar who comes on a horse to claim his right to govern. I have to be seen as a hero.

We have to publish that I threatened the government with an ultimatum and that we will march on Rome to seize power.

It will be on the front page of all Italian newspapers.

— Gather all men we will take the train for Rome and we will publish that 300,000 fascists marched on Rome.

— We can gather at the most 30,000 men.

— A fascist is certainly worth 10 men!

At Rome's train station, Mussolini steps out of a wagon.

— Where is my horse? I need a horse.



Il Duce on a horse

The fascists in black shirts prevent the reporters from taking photos.

A fascist, waiting for the horse, says:

— Patience fellows, you will have plenty of occasions to take all the photos that you will want.

After a few instants they bring the horse that Mussolini mounts. The reporters are then let loose.

— Do you have something to say?

— This march on Rome has cost the lives of 3,000 patriots who believed in our cause, Il Duce replies.

We owe them our victory.

The mob chants “Il Duce!”

In his laboratory, Marconi is pleased.

— Send a congratulations telegram to Mussolini.

— Right away sir.

Fatherly love

Il Duce summons the chief of police and tells him:

— I have some delicate work to charge you with.

— On your orders Sir.

— May I count on your discretion?

— Absolutely.

— There is a woman named Ida Dalser who has a son called Benito Albino. She wants people to believe that she is my wife. Destroy all the documents that may be compromising. In addition keep her under surveillance.

— Yes Il Duce.

— As for this Benito Albino, you must sequester him and make him believe that his mother is dead.

— We could enroll him in the Italian navy where he would not be able to do anything improper.

— Excellent idea!

The hand of an angel

As for Marconi he had accomplished a legal victory!
On the *Elettra* there is a feisty atmosphere.

— Marconi, a guest says, I would like to present you
count Francesco Bezzi-Scali, a Vatican dignitary, his
wife Marchesa Annetta Sacchetti and his daughter,
Maria Cristina.



Maria Christina

Marconi mostly notices the young lady whose family
is part of the “black nobility”.

— I’m very pleased to know you.

Count Bezzi-Scali is jaded.

— What a nice reception!

— What a beautiful young woman you have!

Marconi says transformed.

— They tell me that you are married? Marchesa Sacchetti asks.

— Effectively, I was married but I have divorced.

— It seems to me that the Roman Catholic Church does not acknowledge divorce!

— You are quite right. My grandfather was Scottish and as such he was a protestant. My mother is Irish and she is of the English Methodist faith; I was brought up as such. When I got married I was protestant. A few years ago when I divorced in Fiume I also took some measures to annul my marriage in the Catholic Church and it was done. Since then I have converted to the Catholic faith and so I can get married in the Catholic Church.

— Is that so!

Marconi turns towards Maria Cristina.

— Miss, this ship is used as my laboratory, would you like me to show it to you?

Maria Cristina turns towards her mother who gives her consent by nodding so Maria Christina answers:

— With pleasure.

Marconi leaves with Maria Cristina to visit his ship.

Marconi was glad of being able to court a young woman from high society, so charming and so lovely. Maria Christina was glad to be courted by a man so distinguished and so prestigious.

Marriage made in heaven

In Castelgandolfo, the Pope's summer residence, there is a reception. Cardinal Gaspari says:

— What a nice day it is for me to greet you here, Prime Minister.

Il Duce is uncomfortable because he must restrain what he says.

— Your Eminency Cardinal Gaspari, it is a great honor to come here at your invitation.

— I was led to believe that you have reconciled yourself with the Catholic faith!

— Yes. I have embraced the Christian faith by getting married in church and by baptizing my children. I was born Catholic like most Italians, but I renewed my devotion with the maturity of age.

— I'm pleased at this outcome, because the beliefs of a man of your stature can only be beneficial to the citizens.

— As you are aware my government has taken steps to favor the Catholic faith! We have made it illegal to belong to the free-masons, we have exempted the clergy from taxation, we have reinstated the crucifix in schools and in public places and we have helped financially the parishes that were in dire needs.

— It is admirable and judicious, The Lord will bless you.

— Is there something else that the government can do for you?

Cardinal Gaspari is surprised, because he expected a favor.

— There is the question of the Vatican.

— What do you mean?

Cardinal Gaspari is puzzled that Mussolini doesn't seem to be knowledgeable of that problem.

— The Vatican is in a precarious position. In the 20th century the Holy See was part of the Roman duchy. Then all its properties were conquered by the Italians that made Rome their capital. So now the Holy See doesn't have a legal existence and that causes many problems. We are submitted to the kingdom of Italy, a position that brings us back to what the Church was thirteen centuries ago. It's unacceptable. Of course the Holy See has a moral authority but it is linked to the State that it depends on. For example, will the Italian government's permission be required to name the bishops and cardinals? It's unthinkable.

— You are quite right the situation has to be questioned in detail. We will start the discussion as soon as possible.

— I will assign this task to Monsignor Pacelli.

In Rome's Basilica *Santa Maria degli Angeli* Marconi weds Maria Cristina that is dressed in white.

During the reception that follows the marriage, the newlyweds talk to the guests. Maria Cristina says:

— Guglielmo, I'd like to present you my confessor, Monsignor Pacelli.

Pacelli answers with much charm:

— I am delighted to make your acquaintance. In fact I am much more Maria Christina's spiritual father than I am her confessor.



Marconi and Christina

— I am privileged to meet you. I am convinced that she needs not to confess herself often!

— I would not be able to tell you.

It's a magnificent reception, all of Italy is here.

Maria Cristina adds:

— After our honeymoon in the Villa San Remo, we will go to America.

— Undoubtedly on the *Elettra*! Pacelli replies.

— Of course, Marconi replies.

— So I wish you a pleasant voyage and marriage

that begins on your ship.
Marconi is caught off guard.
— Thank you very much.

New emperor

The Italian ministers are in the *Palazzo Venezia* and Il Duce declares:

— The time has come to assert ourselves. We have been elected to bring back order and to stop anarchy. We have to be authoritarian and firm. All the other political parties have been swept away because they were faltering and feeble. We have to control the press that constantly contradicts itself and that mines our credibility. Italy must regain its strength and its unity. The police will be reinforced in order to identify those that defy authority and it has to control them.

Il Duce has become Italy's master, be it its dictator.

Pastoral work

In 1929, in the Parliament in Rome, Mussolini is alone with a reporter who asks:

— You have negotiated the Latran treaty with the Vatican. Can you explain its principal features other than monetary consideration?

— With pleasure!

The Catholic religion is the sole religion acknowledged by the country.

Italy recognizes the sovereignty of the Holy See. Italy recognizes full property rights of the Vatican and its dependencies.

The Pope is sacred and unassailable, under Italy's protection.

The Vatican has total sovereignty over its residents.

The Vatican has full diplomatic rights and privileges.

The Holy See shall not take part in any political rivalry, other than moral and spiritual ones consequently the Vatican must be politically neutral.

Il Duce tells himself: "This will bring us the world's goodwill as well as the loyalty of the priests and their sheep."

Prophecy

In the Vatican, cardinal Gaspari tells cardinal Pacelli:

— You have concluded a remarkable treaty. Certain people will say that this event has been prophesized in the Bible in Apocalypse 13: 3:

“I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast.” It is not heresy to mention predictions, after all the word “Vatican” means a place of prophecy.

— We have accomplished God’s work and that is important! Whether or not it was prophesized does not really matter!

We are on the *Elettra*’s bridge and D’Annunzio says to Marconi:

— Our king has named you marquis!

— And now you are the Prince of Monte Nevoso!

— For my part, I’m jealous of your fortune, it is certainly worth a principality!

— You know, since the New York stock exchange has collapsed I’m worth much less than one could be led to believe!

— You have still amassed a small fortune whereas I only have my name!

— I would like to ask you a great favor.

— You have everything, what could you possibly ask from me?

- I would like for you to come up with a family motto that I could add to my family arms as a marquis.
- With pleasure!

Pope Pius XI invited Marconi to the Vatican and he says to him:

- Now that the Vatican has a voice independent from that of Italy it must be heard. I would like you to build a radio station inside the new Vatican that will broadcast our opinions all over the world.
- It is a privilege and a pleasure, your Holiness.

Nazi Credo

In the locals of the NSDAP¹³ in Munich, the Nazi leaders are in a meeting. They are all wearing their parade costumes, to bring them a certain aura. Goebbels states:

— *Herr* Hitler, we have received 13.8% of the votes; now that's progress!

— The New York stock crash has provoked the Americans to cash in their loans from the German government. I think that our public finances will be having difficult times, Hitler replies.

— The Jewish bankers are the source of all of problems and we must expose them for what they are.

— Yes, the international Jewry profits from the distress of others and particularly from the Germans, Hitler replies. They are responsible for the people's misery by stuffing their own pockets.

We must denounce this infamy. Jews only want to exploit poor people and take their money to get rich. They are the vermin of society, a plague that multiplies to infest all that is good and pure. We

¹³ Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei –German National Socialist Workers party

must fight against this infestation. We must eradicate this sickness that ravages our society. It will take a considerable force to exterminate this Jewry. To succeed we need a government that is powerful and ruthless that will use all means available to reach its end. This is how we will save the German people.

— I think that Brüning will become Chancellor, Goebbels says.

— He is a member of the Catholic Party of the center. It is a popular party because it attracts Catholics that are numerous. We could recruit Catholics, but they are weak and they hesitate to take draconian measures. Nazi party members cannot be Catholic, they will have to choose!

Goebbels uses the moment to add:

— Here are a few rules for the party:

No Catholic will be able to be a member in good standing of the party.

No member of the party will be authorized to participate in religious events and funerals.

A member of the party that is Catholic will not be allowed to participate in the sacraments.

Our doctrine does not allow any compromise and those who have doubts or hesitations are not welcome.

Cardinal Invitation

We're in a church in Civitavecchia, where the baptism of the newborn of Marconi and his wife Maria Cristina takes place. They agreed to baptize their daughter with the name of his ship that he cherishes so much, the *Elettra*.

— Your Eminence, I am impressed that you have been named cardinal! Maria Christina says.

— It's much to my surprise that the Pope named me as such because I would have preferred to have some pastoral work, but heaven had decided otherwise.

— It's a great joy to have our daughter baptized by you!

— It's an immense pleasure to bless this newborn and to welcome her in the Catholic faith. Normally my occupations prevent me from doing so but for you I freed up some time. Don't hesitate to ask for my services for anything you might require!

— Your Eminence! It's most considerate of you especially now that you are the secretary of state of the Vatican in replacement of Cardinal Gaspari.

— You are wonderful friends and I cherish you a great deal. Now let us welcome Elettra in the midst of the Catholic family!

Sisters

In the Vatican Cardinal Pacelli is visited by his sister.

— Elisabetta, I'm so happy that you answered my invitation so quickly.

— My brother now is an important Cardinal!

— I have a service to ask of you.

— What is it?

— Needless to say my new functions here in Rome are overwhelming! I need you to take care of my household duties. Everything must be impeccable and I count on you more than anyone else.

— How I would like to accommodate you! However first and foremost I must care for my children and my husband and I would not have enough time to do all you would ask of me. It's with much regret that I must refuse!

— I understand, I will find another solution!

A few weeks later in Elisabetta's home, Sister Pascalina knocks at the door.

— Hello, I'm Sister Pascalina. I took care of your brother's household duties when he was in Germany.

— I remember you well. What may I do for you?

— As all Sisters, I don't have any money! I'm in Rome and I don't speak Italian. Would you have the kindness to offer me some lodging for a while?

— I don't have any place because I still have children!

— I can stay in a little corner with the children. Also I

could take care of them freeing you do go shopping or other chores.

— I don't know.

— I beg you, God will bless you!

— Very well, come in.

Temperance

In the Vatican Cardinal Pacelli is in a discussion with Pope Pius XI:

— Your Holiness I have some news from Germany.

— You are very preoccupied with German affairs!

— What can I do, I like these folks that I know very well.

— So then, what is the news?

— Cardinal Bertram of Breslau has condemned without any reservation the extremism, insanity and the ruthlessness of racism. There is a political party named National Socialism also known as Nazi that is a proponent of this anti-Semitism. Later three other Cardinals openly condemned that political party and they stated that no Catholic should adhere to it.

— And so?

— So we have just concluded an accord that affirms our political neutrality.

— It is the obligation of the Holy See here in Rome to be politically neutral. The priests outside the Vatican have much more discretion in that regard. Furthermore that pertains with important moral issues that we have to deal with.

— They are talking about being member of a political party and that is not a moral question.

— Sometimes one has to talk, sometimes one has to be quiet. I think that it is time to talk and I approve of their actions. They have weighed the risks and they are ready to assume the consequences. I do not believe that the risks are so big as to require my

intervention.

— Your Holiness, I got carried away.

— You have worked long, hard and with all your heart on this treaty so it is quite natural that you would not want to endanger it. It is still fragile and in the name of all of Christianity, we must protect the very existence of the Vatican!

— Yes Holiness!

Mission

Elisabetta says:

— Sister Pascalina, soon I must travel to London and so you will have to leave in three days.

— What will I do?

— I'm sorry but that is none of my concern. I have been generous to keep you three weeks at my expense but now you must go.

— I am grateful for your hospitality, I'll manage!

In the Vatican, Sister Pascalina is welcomed by Cardinal Pacelli. She gets down on her knees before him.

— Eminency!

— Yes, what is it?

— I have always been your loyal and devoted servant. I would like to go on serving you. I know all your habits and needs and I beg you to let me take care of you again. I was staying with your sister Elisabetta who had the kindness to let me stay with her, but she cannot continue on doing so. I will not cause you any trouble and I will do whatever you desire. Have pity on me!

— Fine I will take the steps to permit you to take care of my household duties. May God be with you!

Emergence of the mole

We are in 1932 in the University of Oxford's laboratory and the oldest of Marconi's employees, Kemp, is carrying on a conversation with an eminent professor:

— Professor Watt?

— Yes.

— They asked me to contact you.

— Who asked you to contact me?

— Authorities of the British government.

— Who are you?

— My name is George Kemp. I'm Mister Marconi's chief assistant.

— And what have you to tell me?

— May I count on your discretion?

— Obviously since you have been commissioned by the government.

— The former chief of the British Post Office, Mister Preece, asked me to work for Mister Marconi with the recommendation that I watch for Britain's interests. I have always been loyal to Mister Marconi, but since I'm about to retire it is my duty to say that Mister Marconi is working on a secret project. I don't know exactly what he is doing but I know that he is conducting experiments away from everyone. He has never acted in such a way and so it troubles me.

— What can you tell me concerning his research?

— I know very little, but he uses powerful electric condensers.

— That's all?

— No. Well, Mister Marconi is also working on another invention that is used in detecting metallic objects; he names it the “radiotelemetry”.

— This invention could be used for military purposes?

— I’m sure of it. That’s why I brought you some documents concerning this device.

— Very good, Great Britain will be very grateful.

— I’d like to add that there is another member of the *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company* who is part of an elite group of researchers, whose name is Christopher Sydney Cockerell. He too is British.

— Thank you very much, I’ll make a note of it.

War was being brewed and Europe was on alert. The information supplied by Kemp, by Watt and Cockerell contributed to develop a system to detect planes that allowed Great Britain to win the air war against Germany. It was the radar.

Coups

In Berlin, Hindenburg, 84 years old, doesn't have the vigor of yesteryears.

— *Herr* Hitler, Hindenburg says, I'm pleased that you answered my invitation to meet you.

— President Hindenburg!

— Needless to say that the Social Democratic party has the most number of deputies! However the coalition is wavering, having been governed by Brüning, by Von Papen and by Schleicher. Moreover I have heard that Major General Schleicher was preparing a military coup, that he would arrest me and that he would form a military dictatorship. That is unacceptable and dangerous.

Your party, the National Socialism, holds about 37% of the votes that can insure stability. I thus ask you to become Chancellor of Germany and take power.

— That would be an honor, mister President.

A few days later, Hitler enters again Hindenburg's office, flanked by his *Sturm Abteilung* (SA)¹⁴. Hindenburg is upset.

¹⁴ *Sturmableitung* – Assault section.

- What do you want? he asks.
- I need to have emergency powers. The power has to be transferred to the Cabinet for four years.
- Why?
- The communists have set Parliament on fire, the Reichstag, and they wanted to poison milk. Exceptional forces have to be deployed to counter them. We must gather our enemies in concentration camps where we will be able to monitor them. I have to obtain emergency powers.
- Could we do something else?
- Something else, something else, anarchy is at our doors and already people must fight to survive. We cannot wait!
- It's hasty.
- You have to transfer power to me. I have to strengthen German force. We cannot delay. We have to act quickly. The Reichstag does not exist anymore, it was burned and its reconstruction will take time. During that period the Cabinet must have the power to stop any insurrection. It is imperative!
- I don't know.
- It is a question of German security, your security. You cannot imperil German lives. You cannot imperil your life. Act! Act now!
- All right.

In the Vatican Pope Pius XI talks with Cardinal Pacelli:

- Cardinal Pacelli, I've just received some troubling news from Germany.
- Me too, I've read them.
- We are negotiating a concordat with Germany as

we have done with other governments, but Hitler is using it to proclaim that the Vatican has recognized the Nazis. He uses that fact to legitimize his government. On top of that he states that this proves without a doubt that the Nazis are not against religions. He uses devious maneuvers to arrive at his ends!

The Vatican is in discussion with the German government to have its canon laws recognized and by the same token to have the Catholic legislation recognized. These are administrative measures we are talking about; after all we want to practice our religion, the protection of Catholic schools and the interdiction of all clergy to be a member of a political party. We will continue our talks to protect the rights of the 23 million German Catholics.

If the Holy See does not agree to this concordat, Hitler will undoubtedly use that pretext to accuse the Holy See of refusing his offer of reconciliation and so he could then enflame the persecutions against the Catholic Church.

— Then we should agree to the concordat!

A few weeks later in the Vatican, Cardinal Pacelli meets with Monsignor Kaas.

— Monsignor Kaas, Pacelli says, I rejoice to see you again.

— It's too bad that we are in times of turmoil!

— As a representative of the Catholic Church in the German Parliament, could you inform me of what is going on?

— The discussions are tense in Germany. There is more and more violence attributable to military

groups such as the SA, the SS and the Stahlhelm, that all compete with one another. All non Nazi political demonstrations are forbidden. The large industrialists back the Nazis. The communists are hunted and arrested. An anti-Semite movement is being set up.

One has to concede that communists are against all religions that they maintain are the “opium of the masses”. In fact the Soviets have shut sown all the churches.

— How are our negotiations going on to have our rights recognized?

— Hitler refuses all concordats with the Vatican unless the German bishops reverse their decision and that the Center Party that is Catholic vote for the Nazis.

— That would mean that we cannot accept to sign a concordat with Germany.

— The bishops will not accept the idea that Catholicism is compatible with the Nazi party. Nevertheless I shall strive to keep having discussions with Hitler.

— Don't forget that you are my representative. I must be informed exactly what is going on and the Nazis intentions.

— Yes Eminency.

The Reichstag is surrounded by the SA in brown shirts and monsignor Kaas speaks to the Nazi leaders:

— *Herr* Goering, I must make a formal complaint.

Goering is little interested.

— What on earth could you reproach us?

— Many priests have been arrested and I demand that you release them!

— If they were arrested it is because they have broken the law!

— They were only participating in some reunions.

— Illegal reunions, illegal. They are common criminals!

— They are concerned citizens.

— Monsignor Kaas, follow me.

Goering exits and he boards a limousine, accompanied by Monsignor Kaas. They head for the countryside.

— Do you see there in the distance, it is a concentration camp?

The camp becomes more distinct. There are more and more military personnel.

— We are in Oranienburg a few kilometers from Berlin where we have locked up communists. They are German enemies.

There are many gallows where some men have been hanged. Prisoners are famished and some are being beaten.

— All enemies of the people are treated in this fashion, the communists, the anarchists, the alcoholics, the gypsies. All without exception.

Monsignor Kaas feels like vomiting, but he holds back.

— There are other concentration camps in Germany, Wittmoor and Esterwegen near Hannover, Brandenburg near Berlin and so on... I take this opportunity to invite you to the official opening of the Dachau concentration camp on the 22nd of March. It will be a showcase of German technology!

Needless to add that Monsignor Kaas was not present!

A few days later there is a reunion of the Center Party. Monsignor Kaas demands of the leaders of that party:

— Gentlemen, it is with much reticence and bitterness that I invoke you to vote for the Nazis.

Stegerwald is outraged:

— It's unthinkable you want us to give Hitler on a silver plate all the powers of a dictatorship. He would be more powerful than our former Kaiser!

Hackelsburger shares that attitude:

— It would be betraying not only the members of our party but also of all our citizens!

— I implore you the nation is already extremely imperiled. I fully understand your feelings, but it is a question of survival!

Stegerwald is skeptic:

— Have they threatened you?

— They were not threats, they were warnings!

A deadly silence is heard.

Hackelsburger asks:

— What should we do?

— We have to protect our very existence and those of our compatriots!

Inside the Vatican, Pacelli is worried.

— Monsignor Kaas, it's nice seeing you back in Rome.

— Eminency, I'm ashamed to admit it but it is I who has provoked the change in the Center Party's vote.

— I know that you had excellent reasons.

— Your Eminency, Field Marshall Goering showed

me what happens to the opponents of the regime. He showed me a concentration camp. He showed me the vestibule of hell. They are demons that destroy everything on their passage. It is not the Germany that we are accustomed to, the devil has captured it and the Germans are becoming his demons. It is not a question of struggle it is a question of survival.

— The devil and its demons take all kinds of forms. I feared this outcome however I am not of your opinion. We have to combat the forces of evil but we will do it in our terms.

You are right to affirm that we have to survive to keep on fighting. The concordat will allow the Catholic faith to survive in Germany. When the existence of the Catholic Church will not be in jeopardy then we will deal with these maleficent beings!

— I return home with a broken heart! I hope to be convincing because I will act reluctantly.

— You will do God's work. I will send a message to Cardinal Bertram to inform him of the Vatican's position.

Afterwards Monsignor Kaas worked for the Curia never to set foot ever again in his home country.

Inside the Reichstag the Nazi leaders mingle. Hitler declares with disdain:

— Now that the concordat has been signed with the Catholics, we will sign similar agreements with the protestant religions.

Goering chuckles:

— They are scared of a few hangings. They are

weak!

Goebbels enters the folly:

— Now we can present our law to castrate mental patients, alcoholics and other degenerates that only soil our race.

— Exactly, Hitler exclaims with joy. There are no impediments to stop us from doing whatever we want!

Goebbels is somber:

— There is the Jewish question to deal with. We have to arrive at a final solution.

Goering is sarcastic:

— The concentration camps in Sachsenburg and Colditz are now functioning. Soon Fuhlsbuettel, Hohnstein will also open so what more do we need?

Goebbels says with contempt:

— The purity of the race is a scientific question.

Hitler declares:

— Gentlemen, we have other cats to skin!

Hours of glory

In 1935, Hitler arrived in Venice for a meeting with Il Duce, dressed in a trench coat and wearing a fedora. He was welcomed by a band whose music was interlaced with chants of “Duce”.

Il Duce welcomed Hitler as if he was a ridiculous buffoon. They went to the palace to have some private talks.

Hitler spoke German and Il Duce, not having wanted an interpreter, tried very hard to understand his guest. Hitler ignored his host and proclaimed:

— We are both nationalists fascists, we share the same values and we do not hesitate to brandish force to exercise our power. I will conquer Europe by attacking France so quickly that she will not be able to react. The British don't have any leader that can influence me; they are the week-minded and are afraid of everything. As for Austria I will annex her without any difficulty.

Il Duce tries desperately to speak in German:

— Italy has her African colonies Erythrea, Somalia and Lybia that I twill solidify and enlarge. Now I will conquer Abyssinia to avenge the defeat of Adoua.

— We understand each other, Hiler replies with a smile.

In 1935, 400,000 Italian soldiers invaded Abyssinia under the command of General De Bono. Though superior in number, Emperor Haile Selassie's troops were very badly equipped and in May 1936 they were defeated. On the balcony of the *Palazzo*

Venezia, in Rome, Il Duce declared: “Italy finally has its empire!” followed by “Will you be worthy?” He was acclaimed by the crowd that extolled him with nine encores.

Inside a radio station in Italy Marconi speaks in the microphone with an articulated and accentuated voice:

— Dear friends, my name is Guglielmo Marconi, I am the inventor of the radio. I am also President of the Royal Italian Academy, senator and member of the Grand Fascist Council. We are honoring the ninth anniversary of fascism and its leader, Benito Mussolini. Rome, the eternal city, was restored by the fascist regime that brought back its former glory that it had during the reign of Emperor Augustus. The fascist regime has improved museums, roads, manufacturing plants, hospitals and the schools of Italy. Science and culture have a new life because they have been strongly encouraged and promoted by the fascist regime of which we are so proud.

Marconi travels quite a lot and he spreads the fascist propaganda. At the inauguration of a Brazil radio station, Marconi wears a heavily decorated fascist uniform and he solemnly announces on the radio station’s microphone:

— When I left Italy our Duce faced a diplomatic and a political combat that is sacred to our natural expansion, for the security of our colonies and for Italy’s prestige in our African colonies.

All of Italy has taken part in this combat from the veterans to the youths who wear the black shirts.

Italy was neglected in the Treaty of Versailles following the First World War, but she now claims her rights.

You who are colonizing Brazil, it is your duty to work for your land even though your belongings are meager. Il Duce has instilled a sentiment of pride and vigor that contributes to prosperity, which will bring us more victories and will insure that we have a privileged place in this world.

Long live Italy!

Long live the king!

Long live Il Duce!

Long live Brazil!

In America, Margherita Sarfatti makes some publicity for Mussolini's fascist party.

Clara Petacci is a 24 years old young woman, born from a distinguished family. Her father is Pius XI's doctor. Il Duce notices her and summons her. He offers her to work for him. She feels obliged but flattered at becoming his assistant. He compliments her. He gently touches her arm; she shivers. He looks at her, he devours her with his stare; she avoids his look. He asks her for small services; she hurries to please him.

One day he looks at her in her eyes and he kisses her. She doesn't put up any resistance. He notices it so he profits from her resignation. He seduces her. She submits and lets him take her body in his powerful hands, shed her clothes with his experienced fingers, suck her nipples that are already stiff, massage her moist vulva, separate her

docile legs and penetrate her till she loses all control. He hoped in vain that she was still a virgin. Since he didn't want any children, he ejaculates on her stomach. She's at his mercy. She becomes his mistress and she satisfies his needs whenever he wants.

She loves him.

In 1937, Il Duce learned that Ida Dalser, who had been locked up in an insane asylum¹⁵ on the Venetian isle of San Clemente, was deceased from a cerebral hemorrhage after having received a series of injections to induce her in a coma. Il Duce told himself: "Finally she won't be able to hinder me anymore!"

Benito Albino Mussolini was also locked up in an insane asylum where he died in 1942. We do not know if Il Duce was informed of it or if he cared even a little.

¹⁵ expression of the time

Death ray

In a Milan suburb, Marconi, Il Duce and his wife Rachele stepped out of their car and overlooked a road where cars were circulating.

— So, you want me to witness one of your experiments? Il Duce says.

— Yes. It isn't a radio device, it is a weapon.

— A weapon! I did not know that you were inventing weapons?

— While doing some research I caused an unexpected reaction. I have perfected the device and created a weapon.

— But what are we doing here on top of this hill?

— You see the cars running on this road?

— Of course. You aren't about to destroy all of those civilian vehicles?

— Not quite.

— Well show me!

Marconi presses on a switch and a little explosion is heard. All the cars and trucks stop. The drivers try to restart their cars to no avail. They get out of their cars enraged.

— It's you who has caused that? Il Duce asks.

— Yes.

— It's like a death ray!

— It doesn't kill; this device only destroys the electric circuits.

— And the drivers?

— They are more or less victims of science!

— This weapon will enable me to conquer Europe.

— Europe?

Marconi suddenly becomes conscious of the use that Il Duce wants to have and he loses his innocence.

Public denunciation

In a church in Bavaria the officiating priest climbs to the preacher's box and begins his homely:

— Needless to say my dear parishioners, we are going through terrible times. The Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, has sent a papal encyclical entitled *With burning anxiety*¹⁶ where the Pope declares that it is with deep sorrow and great desolation that we are witnessing the tribulations and persecutions against the German Catholic Church. The 1933 concordat has been overtly violated and our conscience has been oppressed as never before. It has come to pass that all of Bavaria's Catholic schools have been shut down by the Gestapo¹⁷.

He declares all who worship the race and deify temporal values pervert divine order and falsify faith in God.

The Church of our Savior is the same for all races and for all nations.

It also sends a message to priests and it states that our relations with our neighbors must aim at the truth

¹⁶ « Mit brennender Sorge »

¹⁷ « Geheime Staats Polizei » Homeland State Police.

and to expose all errors. Any abstention to this duty is not only treason towards God and our vocation, but also towards the nation's wellbeing. The Pope transmits his gratitude and his support to all the clergy who have been persecuted, imprisoned and locked up in concentration camps.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the present government oppresses the weak and rejects persons of other races such as Blacks and Jews. This is against Christianity that is motivated by charity, goodness and the love of everyone.

Some parishioners rise and leave mass.

The secret

In the Vatican, Pacelli is alone with Marconi who says:

— Eminency, you are Maria Christina's confessor. She has absolute confidence in you. We consider you as a good personal friend and you have reciprocated our friendship, that's why I confide in you. In addition you are the Vatican's Secretary of State and you understand politics much better than I. Your opinion is very precious to me.

— Your friendship and your confidence touch me profoundly. I pray the Holy Spirit to endow me with the wisdom to answer you.

— Your Eminency, I have a dilemma. My work consists of making experiments and to offer the results to society. I have recently discovered a phenomenon that can be used to make a weapon. In fact I put on a demonstration to Il Duce who was very anxious to get the weapon. However at the end of the demonstration, he declared that he would use it to conquer Europe. Truly I had never imagined that this weapon could provoke such consequences. I have to add that I am a fervent fascist and a true patriot. My duty is to offer my homeland the fruits of my labour. After all I owe much to my homeland.

— Patriotism is laudable because it strengthens the links between the people and it contributes to protect them against adversity. However faith in God is more important. God is the source of love for others where patriotism can flow. You have largely helped humanity and contributed to Italy's prosperity. Arms

should be used to protect against enemy attacks. Italy doesn't have any enemy at this time other than Abyssinia and it is because Italy attacked it. It is contrary to Christian morality to kill people for prestige. We cannot fall into this trap. Italy is Germany's ally and Germany has become a place of devilish infestation where misery and evil reign. This alliance is damned. The weapon that you have devised is the devil's tool that would be used to destroy and that would sustain the forces of evil. I implore you to follow the path of the Lord who seeks peace and happiness.

— But Il Duce has seen this weapon, he knows that it exists and he will demand to possess it!

— It is a temptation of the devil that you must reject at all cost. Destroy your invention, your notes and everything that can explain it. It will be the single most important act of your lifetime, an act that will remain secret and that will be forgotten by history. Let your faith guide you and the Holy Spirit will help you!

Marconi gets down on his knees.

— Thank you Eminency for your wise council.

— Go in peace my son!

Though these are appeasing words, Marconi's heart and soul are torn between patriotism and Christian faith.

Martyr

In the *palazzio Venezia* in Rome, Il Duce and his bodyguards are in uniform. Marconi arrives in time.

— Good afternoon Duce, Marconi salutes.

— You have destroyed your weapon so it seems? Il Duce replies in a sharp and disapproving way.

— Yes!

— Then give me the plans.

Marconi does not dare tell him that he refuses.

Il Duce gives him a pencil and a paper.

— Draw the plans, Il Duce adds.

Marconi does not budge.

Il Duce becomes more conciliatory:

— A few days ago you made the demonstration of a weapon. If you showed it to me it is because you wanted to give it to Italy. Do you take me for an idiot? Why did you put on this show, to ridicule me?

— No. I changed my mind.

— What the hell happened?

— I listened to my conscience.

— Your conscience, really? What did it say?

— I don't want this weapon to be used to conquer other countries.

— What? But you aren't a politician, you're a scientist. It is up to me to take political decisions. You're insulting me in Italy's Presidential Palace.

Marconi prays silently within himself.

— This weapon is evil and I can't let anyone have it.

— But you are a fascist. You are an officer of the Italian army. It would be treason not to divulge a military secret to your country's highest authority!

— It would be treason towards Christianity to reveal it!

— You want to become a traitor towards your country?

Your mother was British wasn't she?

— She was Irish. I did not betray Italy, because I'm not obligated to reveal this secret.

— You are required to do so because it is a military secret. You will dishonor your family and your children. Your name will be tarnished forever. You will be dragged in the mud. Your name and your reputation will be shit. That's what you want?

— I accept my choice and its consequences!

— I'm giving you one week to explain your invention. If you don't I will destroy you. You will be stripped of your functions as a senator, as president of the Italian Academy and as a member of the Greater council of Fascism. You will be treated as a traitor. You will lose your status as a marquis and you will be ignored by Italy's good society. Your business will lose all of its contracts with the government. You will be charged with high treason and you will have a trial that will condemn you. All of your possessions will be seized. Your wife will leave you and will disavow you. Your children will be ashamed of you and they will be ridiculed. That is your choice!

The next day in the Vatican Pacelli warmly says to Marconi who is tired and stressed:

— It's good to see you again!

— Your Excellency!

— Would you like to have something to drink or to eat?

— No thanks!

I have acted according to my conscience but Il Duce is insistent. Lately he threatened me. I know that I cannot give in, but my wife and children are also involved. I don't think that I have the strength to resist.

— You may not have the force to resist by yourself, but the Lord will help you!

— Help me Excellency!

— If you allow me I will confer with his Holiness upon the matter?

— Of course Excellency.

The fateful day nears. Marconi is at home. Maria Cristina senses that there is something wrong with her husband.

— What is it dear?

— I can't speak to you about it.

— You should talk about it that might help.

— I'd like to but I can't do that.

— You must go to your meeting with Il Duce; is that what is bothering you?

— Yes.

— He likes you very much so why should you be worried?

Marconi falls, floored by a heart attack.

Three days later Marconi is sitting on a wheelchair. He goes to the Vatican where he is welcomed by Cardinal Pacelli and Pope Pius XI:

— I bless you my son and I pray that you will be able to surmount this test. Sometimes it requires much courage to do nothing in front of devilish forces that

wait for a pretext to unleash all of its evil. My son, have the courage to stay silent!

— Thank you your Holiness.

— Let us pray. *Pater noster qui est in caelis...*

The deadline had come and Marconi who feared a clash with Il Duce is again floored by a heart attack and in this case it is fatal.

The next day all the radio stations of the world observe two minutes of silence as a tribute to Marconi.

At Marconi's funeral the fascists are in full force and make the funeral their own.

D'Annunzio is saddened and tells Maria Cristina:

— I offer my sympathy to you and your children.

— Majesty.

— It's odd that Mussolini isn't present at this fascist funeral!

— He must be very busy. He will undoubtedly send me his apologies.

— Your past husband had asked me for a favor that I never fulfilled.

— I don't recall!

— He asked me to think of a motto for his family arms and I didn't do it! Well I believe that I have one that describes him well.

— It will be a great privilege for our family.

— The motto is *Audere silenter*, meaning "To dare in silence".

— Since you are a famous poet and you knew him well, I'm certain that it is perfectly appropriate!

This motto is especially appropriate in that Marconi had carried his secret with him in his tomb.

Defender of the faith

In 1938, in the Vatican, Pope Pius XI was in a discussion with Cardinal Pacelli.

— I received an unexpected letter from Mussolini, the Pope says.

— What did he want?

— He asked me to excommunicate Hitler.

— It's incredible! Are you sure of its source?

— Yes I'm certain that Mussolini has made that request. It's ridiculous.

— He isn't the kind of man to make jokes.

— Why does he make such a request?

— He seems vexed at Hitler's annexation of Austria following his *Anschluss*.

— Anyway, it is out of the question that I excommunicate Hitler. He doesn't understand what an excommunication is. Mussolini would apparently want a public excommunication yet it isn't a political act of condemnation, rather it's a religious act that aims to incite repentance and contrition. I will certainly not change the nature of this act in order to please him! It would be abusing of my rights!

— I know of local sources that Hitler is not a true practicing Catholic, so it would be futile to forbid him to participate in the sacraments which he never does.

— As for all the faithful, whoever has committed a crime is automatically excommunicated and has the obligation to confess before practicing any sacrament!

— I will answer him in a diplomatic fashion that this

is not appropriate.

During that time, Germany was engulfed into Nazi hell.

Genocide for insurance purposes

It is a reunion of the Nazi leaders, Goering, Goebbels, Heydrich, Funk, and others.

— Gentlemen! Goering shouts. This reunion is important. I've received a letter from the *Führer*¹⁸ who orders that the Jewish question be resolved once and for all. Since it is essentially an economic question it will be dealt with in that way. I have had enough of these riots such as the one that occurred a few days ago during the Night of the Broken Glass¹⁹. They don't trouble the Jews, they perturb the economy. It's the insurance companies that have to pay for the damages to the Jewish businesses. This must stop. The Jews must pay for these damages.

It is up to you gentlemen to take the decisions required to eliminate the Jews from our economy and to account for this to me.

¹⁸ *Führer* means chief.

¹⁹ *Krystallnacht* shattered windows when Jewish businesses were attacked.

God's new shepherd

In the Vatican Pope Pius XI is deceased. Pacelli, acting as the Chamberlain knocks three times on the corpse's forehead with a small silver hammer while saying "Rise" in Italian! Finally the Pope's death is certified:

— The Pope is dead. Achille Ratti, I commend you to God.

Afterwards, Pacelli destroys the fisherman's ring as well as the Pope's seal. The ring is placed in the second coffin made of lead.

A few weeks later outside the Vatican, some white smoke comes out of the chimney of the Sistine Chapel. On March 2, 1939 Pacelli is acclaimed as Pope Pius XII and he presents himself on the balcony in front of the crowd that rejoices. From now on, everyone will kneel in front of the Pope who is God's representative on earth.

In September 1939, after the Germans invaded Poland and France, Great Britain and its Dominions declared war on Germany and this became the Second World War.

Pius XII was to lead his followers to combat against the forces of hell.

Private and public accusations

In 1940 the Second World War is in full swing. In the Vatican Pacelli is sitting down in front of a table where there are many volumes; he is facing Von Ribbentrop, Minister of Germany's Foreign Affairs who is grave and arrogant.

— I come on behalf of the *Führer* to congratulate you as the new Pope. We rejoice at this outcome because you know the German people very well.

We are a great nation with great resources. With the *Führer*, we are building a new Germany and now we can compete with any other nation.

German genius is at its peak and our combined forces are superior to all the world has known. We will win and that holds for our air force, our navy and our army. We attack with the speed of lightning and with an incomparable force. Nobody can resist us. Germany's ultimate and complete victory is inevitable.

In these circumstances it would be dangerous that the Vatican take side with our opponents that will be vanquished and broken.

Pius XII opens one of the volumes in front of him and reads out loud the notes.

— September 1st 1939 at 4h50 the city of Wielun in Poland that had no equipment or military personnel was attacked by three waves of bombers. Then the fighters machined gunned the civilians, killing 1,200 of them.

September 10, 1939 in Bydgoszcz Pomerania 100 young men were shot in front of the Jesuit's church and 3,700 mental patients²⁰ were also shot. Twenty of the 650 priests were not shot or sent to concentration camps.

September 13, 1939 the city of Frampol in Poland that had no military equipment or personnel was annihilated by the Luftwaffe simply as an exercise because the town looked like a grid iron....

Ribbentrop gets up and leaves the room.

At the Vatican's radio station Pius XII declares:

— There are hundreds of thousands persons who had committed no fault that were condemned to death or to die slowly only because of their nationality or their race.

June 10, 1940 Italy joined Germany in the war against the Allies.

On June 25 France capitulated.

²⁰ Expression of the time

Einstein

On the 23 December 1940, an article signed by Albert Einstein appeared on page 38 of the newspaper *Time*:

“Being a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but, no, the universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom; but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks....

Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced thus to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly.”

Tentations of the devil

Some German bishops reveal to Pius XII some confidential information that they have heard from many priests in many dioceses. Even though there is a formal interdiction to reveal the content of private confessions, facing a large number of monstrous crimes many priests have confided to their bishops in general terms of the atrocities men have been forced to commit against their conscience.

Pius XII makes a speech to the College of Cardinals:

— ... we are troubled that many persons have committed acts of extermination of which I will spare you the details. We must warn you that anything we say to the authorities must be considered with care and weighed in the interest of the victims themselves, in order not to make their situation harsher and more unbearable.

Asylum

On the streets of Rome, a family is fleeing the police. The father knocks at a rabbi's home.

— Rabbi Lapide, we need your help because the Gestapo is chasing the Jews from door to door; someone told us to come here.

— Go to the Vatican they will help you find an asylum.

— To the Vatican?

— Yes, yes, the Vatican! The right of asylum is still respected in the churches of Italy.

— Thank you rabbi.

The family goes to the Vatican. Outside a Swiss guard answers.

— We are Jewish and we are fleeing the fascists. Can you lodge us?

— I'm sorry but we already have too many refugees. Even Castel Gandolfo is full; there are over 3,000 refugees there alone. Go to the monastery of the Benedictine Sisters of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

— I'm most grateful.

The family goes to the monastery. The father knocks at the front door.

— Yes, a Sister answers.

— A Vatican Swiss guard told us that we could find lodging here.

— Of course!

— I thought that monasteries were cloistered?

— The Holy Father has lifted that barrier and he even encouraged us to help any refugee in all ways

possible. Normally it would be out of the question for a nunnery to lodge a man but these are trying times!

— My gratitude is endless Sister. I must confide that long ago we have applied to immigrate to America, Great Britain and many other places but no country would accept us. I thank you with all my heart in my name, in the name of my family and in the name of Yahweh²¹.

The Holy Father is not one to promise the world without acting, rather he belongs to the humble minority who acts in silence.

²¹ *Yahweh* means God in Hebrew.

Friendship

In 1943, in the German headquarters in Berlin, Hitler spits out:

— The Italians under Marshall Badoglio have capitulated practically without having put up any fight! The cowards! On top of that they have the gall to join the Allies and to declare war against Germany. Mussolini ran away and was arrested. This is unacceptable. I need to have Mussolini on my side. I will not have my ally stay captive in the hands of the rebels. Italy must remain fascist. We have to take charge. We have to put order. We have to arrest the Jews that are the root cause of the Italian defeat. We have to occupy the Vatican, take its archives and its works of art whose value is priceless; we have to transfer the Pope and the Curia so that they don't fall into Allied hands. Italy belongs to us and I intend to keep it.

— My *Führer*, may I make a comment? General Carlo Wolff asks.

— What?

— Undoubtedly the German Catholics would object if we invaded the Vatican and we would seize its art

works! It would be unwise at this time to have them turn their backs on us. I believe that the risk is too great.

— Maybe. For the time being I will agree with you.

Inside the *Führer's* headquarters, Hitler meets the SS²² Radl and Skorzeny, a colossus with a scar on his cheek.

— *Obersturmführer* Skorzeny, *Obersturmführer* ²³ Radl tells me that you are an exceptional commando officer. I have a mission for you. Mussolini was captured and I fear that the king of Italy is about to hand him to the Allies. Your mission named "*Eiche*"²⁴, consists in discovering where he's being held and to bring him here alive in my "Wolf's lair." ²⁵

— Yes *Führer*, Skorzeny answers.

²² SS is an abbreviation of Schutzstaffel, a military corps headed by Hitler.

²³ *Obersturmführer* is the equivalent of an *Oberleutnant* (captain) in the German army.

²⁴ « Eiche » means oak.

²⁵ In the north of Poland in the city of Kentrzyn

SS Commando

Inside the German embassy in Rome a group of SS commandos, the ambassador and his aides are gathered around a table. Skorzeny, the officer in charge asks:

— Do you know where Mussolini is held captive?

— Yes, our informers have followed him to the hour. He is in the north of Sardinia in the Maddalena fortress.

— Do you have the plans?

— Here they are!

Skorzeny examines the plans very carefully. After a few minutes he concocts a strategy.

— We'll use torpedo boats and we'll attack by the sea.

The sale of Jews

In the SS headquarters in Rome, where there are a few Jews, an SS commander tells rabbi Lapide:

— We are holding 200 Jews. I'll give you 36 hours to hand me 50 kilos of gold or else the prisoners will be deported. Is that clear?

— 50 kilos of gold in 36 hours is a lot to ask!

— Ridiculous! Everybody knows that Jews are rich so open up your purses if the lives of the prisoners are of any value to you!

Rabbi Lapide attempts to gather the gold in the Jewish community, but he has a great deal of difficulty in achieving this so he goes to the Vatican where he is received by Pius XII.

— Holy Father the SS have jailed 200 hostages and they demand 50 kilos of gold in exchange for them. I don't think that our community can gather that quantity of gold in the time allowed. You are the only person to whom I can make this request in these times of misery. Can you help me out?

— Naturally we will provide the difference. Go in peace!

— May Yahweh bless you!

Help from the sky

In the SS headquarters in Rome an officer asks Skorzeny.

— *Oberst*, the Italians have transferred Mussolini. He's now on the summit of the Apennine Mountains in the *Albert Refugio*.

— I'm cancelling the torpedo boats. We have to find another solution. I'll photograph the location.

Skorzeny boards a reconnaissance plane and he flies over the Gran Sasso to take some photos.

At the Practica di Mare airport 17 SS and 90 *Fallschirmjäger Lehr* ²⁶ are ready with their equipment.

Skorzeny and Radl examine the photos and the maps and Skorzeny says:

— It will be difficult to get there because it's located at an altitude of a thousand meters!

— It would be very dangerous to parachute on that mountain!

— Land access is equally difficult because there is no road there is only one railroad that goes there! In

²⁶ *Fallschirmjäger* = paratroops

addition there is an important Italian garrison at the base of the mountain that could slow down the attackers for a few hours until the reinforcements would arrive.



Skorzeny

— There is a cable car to access the hotel. It would be very difficult to go there using that means of transportation. The Italians would cut the cable and wait for reinforcements.

Climbing the mountain would also require a lot of time. I can only figure out one solution.

- What?
- Gliders²⁷.
- Can we land there?
- There is a grazing field.
- He examines the photo.
- Yes, here.
- It's short to land on but I believe that it's feasible.
- Good and now to get back!
- With Mussolini?
- Gerlach!
- What?
- Gerlach. He's an acrobatic pilot. He has a plane that is awesome, a *Feisler Storch*.
- Why not!
- One problem remains I don't know the number of guards that we will have to deal with.
- Let's bring Italian soldiers with us!
- Excellent idea. Let's start by kidnapping general Soleti who was arrested by the Italians.
- Yes commandant.

An Italian military truck stops in front of a house guarded by a few sentinels. Some SS come out of the back of the truck, neutralize the Italian sentinels,

²⁷ There were no helicopters at that time!

destroy the radios and evacuate the place.

— Are you general Soleti? Skorzeny asks.

— Yes.

— Take your uniform with you and come with us.

— Under whose orders?

— Under the SS orders. We are going to save Italy.

At the airport the officer in charge tells Skorzeny:

— I have some bad news, the Italians are about to deliver Mussolini to the Allies.

— Where are the gliders?

— Twelve gliders are arriving tonight from France, Radl answers.

— And the paratroop battalion?

— They are ready to capture the cable car station.

— So we attack tomorrow at 12:30.

At sunrise 300 SS are parachuted in the valley and they march to the cable car station and hide.

At 12:30 the planes get off the ground trailing the gliders. The gliders detach themselves a few kilometres away. Eight of the twelve gliders approach the *Gran Sasso*, the other having been lost.

At 13:00 the paratroops capture the lower cable car station, stopping any Italian unit from going up. The Italians cut the cables and signal the attack to their headquarters. They wait for reinforcements.

The glider pilot tells Skorzeny:

— The grazing field in reality is a steep ski slope. It won't be possible to land there!

— Well then let's dive and land as closely as possible to the hotel.

- It's a very rocky terrain.
- To hell with any damage!

A glider lands within 50 feet of the hotel. Some SS disembark and set up a machine gun. Two other gliders land practically at the same time and some men set up another machine gun while some men encircle the hotel.

Skorzeny has disembarked near the cable car's exit and his troops make sure that no reinforcement can come out. Skorzeny goes towards the hotel in front of his men.

Il Duce observes everything from the window of his balcony above the main entrance.

There is an Italian guard in front of the hotel that is about to fire. General Soleti, dressed with his Italian general uniform, shouts:

— Don't fire! Don't fire!

Il Duce orders:

— Soldier, what are you doing? It's an Italian general! Don't fire! All is well.

The guard is confused and doesn't fire. The SS disarm him and others enter the Hotel

There is a six foot wall that Skorzeny climbs over with the help of two of his men using their rifle and shoulders. Others follow him. They're on a terrace facing the main entrance.

Another guard appears and general Soleti again shouts:

— Don't fire! Don't fire!

The guard is disarmed.

General Soleti asks:

— Duce, Duce, step away from the window!

Il Duce steps away. Skorzeny, Schwerdt and Solari enter the hotel where the soldiers are half-asleep and totally surprised.

General Soleti stays at the reception to appease the Italians. The SS climb the stairs and head towards the room where Duce showed himself on the balcony. They rush in. Il Duce is flanked by two Italian officers and a civilian.

— Duce, the *Führer* has sent us to free you! Skorzeny says with authority.

— I was certain that the *Führer* wouldn't let me down.

Il Duce extends his hand and embraces them.

— Now we have to leave! Skorzeny says.

They go out and some SS carry Mussolini's luggage. The *Flieser Storch* has landed on a prairie and its motor is still running. The SS place the luggage in the baggage compartment and Mussolini and Skorzeky get in tightly in the plane.

Gerlach warns them:

— We're overloaded but I think it will do! Tell the men to push the plane!

— You four, push the plane, Skorzeny orders.

The plane inches forward on the rocky ski slope.

Suddenly the plane drops in a steep dive off the cliff. Everyone except the pilot braces himself. The plane gathers speed. Nearly at the bottom, just before crashing the pilot uprights the plane in a spectacular climb. Il Duce is always excited when risking his life and he notices that he has an erection. He hides it.

After many stopovers they arrive in Prussia at the
250

Wolf's Lair where Hitler meets the escapees.

— Skorzeny, you have carried out well an operation that will be part of history's annals! You have liberated my friend Mussolini; I adorn you as Knight of the Iron Cross and I name you *Sturmbannführer*²⁸ SS, with my admiration!

He pins the decoration and the rank to Skorzeny. Then he extends his handshake to Il Duce.

— You have witnessed how our army is invincible, now you will go back to Italy to carry on the combat.

Il Duce surmounts his desire to rest peacefully. He must lie to the *Führer*:

— Together we shall win!

Next Il Duce will have to muster all of his courage to confront his wife who is as formidable as Hitler!

²⁸ The equivalent of Major.

Prediction

In 1944, Rachele Mussolini decides to talk with Clara Petacci who is staying near Garda Lake. Rachele had heard that the fascists wanted to discredit Mussolini by revealing that he had a mistress, Clara Petacci. We might think that Rachele was angry at her husband or his mistress but that was not the case. Incredibly she phones Mussolini to tell him what she was about to do and she says that she wants to be accompanied by two witnesses and the driver.

Then she goes to the Minister of the Interior, Buffarini:

— Finish dressing and come with me! She orders.

— Where are we going?

— I'll tell you on the way. Hurry!

When everyone is in the limo she tells them of her intentions. Buffarini doesn't want any additional witness.

It's raining hard.

They ring at the villa but the German sentinel refuses to let them in. The group tries in vain to convince the sentinel. Finally she insists that Buffarini find a solution. He asks Rachele:

— Are you armed?

— No I'm never armed when I visit someone.

Buffarini manages to negotiate the meeting and they enter the house.

Rachele avoids looking directly at Clara Petacci.:

— Miss or misses? Rachele asks.

— Miss.

— I haven't come here as a jealous wife. I don't want to threaten you either.

— Well what are you doing here?

— Your presence is feeding the gossip that is tarnishing my husband's reputation. I love him and sometimes love requires sacrifice. If I believed that it would be best for me to leave for the love of my husband, I would do it.

Miss, you say that you love my husband, if that is true stop seeing him. I ask you that not for me but for my husband. You know that my husband loves children. Ever since Bruno's death in the war, we only have four children. It's also for them that I'm asking you to leave him because you are troubling our family. Leave Lake Garda!

Clara Petacci collapses in tears. Rachele continues her intervention:

— I can't stand women who think that tears can solve everything. It is totally irresponsible. Furthermore you have kept my husband's compromising letters and that is stupid and dangerous. You have agreed that there be a telephone line between here and my home when all conversations are monitored by the Germans. You are even in the company of dishonest people. Do you realize that your behavior is extremely dangerous?

Since Clara Petacci did not say anything, Rachele shakes her and tells her:

— Miss, you claim that Il Duce loves you. If it is so, try with me to overcome these trials and help my husband.

Clara Petacci rises, then she goes up to the second

floor and comes back with a bunch of letters:

— Here are the thirty two letters that your husband sent me.

Observing that the documents are but copies Rachele looses her continence and shouts:

— You have no idea of how you are exposing Il Duce with these letters and your conversations, when the Germans listening to everything that you say and when spies use everything they can get their hands on!

Clara Petacci faints.

Buffarini is more interested in the bottle of cognac that was a rarity at the end of the war.

Finally, Clara Petacci awakens and whispers:

— Il Duce can't live without me.

— That isn't true. My husband knows that I'm here, call him and ask him!

— Benito dear, can you come here?

Il Duce who had heard from the second story answers:

— Yes, I know that my wife is here and she's right. We have to end our relation.

Rachele adds:

— If you continue you will have a tragic end, miss. You will finish assassinated on the *Piazzale Loreto*!

How could they have known that these words were foretelling the future?

Christian charity

On June 4, 1944, the Allies liberate Rome after the Germans had evacuated it and declared it a free city. All the church bells toll. The Jews and other persons who were hiding come out and smell the fresh air like the taste of springtime.

In the Benedictine *St Cecilia in Trastevere's* monastery, a Sister says to the father of the Jewish family:

- Come! It's the end of the war.
- This is the moment we never thought would come!
- You're free!
- We're alive! How can we thank you enough for having protected us for so long?
- It's an act of Christian charity. Be grateful to the Holy Father to have allowed us to open our gates for you!
- May Yahweh bless you.
- Go in peace!

Clairvoyance

Mussolini was not the kind of man you could dictate to. He went back to Clara Petacci regardless of Rachele's warning.

In 1945, a convoy of cars and armed cars is going to Switzerland. It is joined by a German flak unit. In Masso, it is stopped by partisans, commanded by Walter Audisio, known under the name Colonel Valerio. The Germans had convinced Il Duce, who was in one of their trucks, to wear a German soldier's uniform. The contents of the trucks are examined. Il Duce is recognized and placed under arrest. He is taken to Milan.

— Give me the list of the prisoners, orders Colonel Valerio.

He ticks off 15 names. The selected persons are jailed including Mussolini and Clara Petacci.

Colonel Valerio enters the room where Mussolini and Clara Petacci are under guard and he tells them:

— I came here to save you, follow me.

The couple follows him.

— Get in the car.

They board the car that drives them a little further.

— Now get out here.

They get out at the *Piazzale Loreto* and the car leaves. They become aware that there is an execution squad in front of them. Clara is terrified and she trembles. Mussolini is waiting to die stoically, as if he was in a last duel.

— Aim!

The soldiers aim at Il Duce.

— No, no, don't fire! Clara cries out while protecting Mussolini.

The Colonel orders:

— Fire.

They kill Clara who collapses.

— Aim!

Fire!

They kill Benito Mussolini, known as Il Duce.



Mussolini and Clara Petacci

Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, are hanged upside down accompanied with 15 other fascists. The crowd insults the corpses and the police use water jets to calm them and make them

scatter.

1962 – 2005

Devil's advocate

In 1963, Rolf Hochhuth was an author who has written plays such as *Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel*²⁹. In the IVth act, *Il gran rifiuto*, Scene I, the Pope stated that the Holy See remained neutral, in essence accusing Pius XII of doing nothing throughout the holocaust, rather than openly condemning the Germans. According to him, Pius XII played solely a diplomatic role.

During dozens of years this play initiated a controversy and continued to create a doubt on the Pope's role during the Jewish extermination. Certain people would have wanted that Pius XII excommunicate Hitler with a public statement. They do not take into account of the context that severely limited the Holy See's possible courses of action. The Vatican had to remain neutral. It would have been to fail the principles of Catholic heroism to risk the very existence of the Vatican. Moreover any formal denunciation would have been followed by reprisals that would have accelerated the massacres of Jews and priests.

²⁹ The Representative, a Christian tragedy

However, Pius XII did everything possible to help the Jews without putting the Vatican in peril. No country or any other Christian or Muslim religion did anything remotely comparable. As a matter of fact who at that time denounced anti-Semitism? So why point out the Catholic Church?

However this movement precipitated many replies in defense of the Holy See, even by many distinguished Jews.

Still for many people Hochhuth's question is troubling.

Rediscovered weapon

In 1962, there were American nuclear tests above the Johnston atoll that perturbed electronic devices in the Hawaiian isles. The phenomenon was studied and resulted in the making of new weapons, electromagnetic pulse bombs.

We are now in 1985, on a military base in the Nevada desert. Trucks, jeeps and tanks advance in columns. A plane flies over them and drops a bomb on top of one of them. All the vehicles halt and their motors shut down. A general says to his colleague:

— This electromagnetic pulse bomb is efficient against vehicles, radios, radars and most of the electric devices. It stops all movement that is electrically activated without hurting anyone.

— It could also stop ships and planes.

— It's a weapon that is easy to use with proximity targeting and it's cheap to manufacture.

— Luckily the Axis didn't have this kind of bomb during the Second World War they would surely have won it!

— No doubt!³⁰

In 1997, At the National Security of the United States hearings a scientist testifies:

— Sir, the fundamental point is that all of our conventional weapons and our entire civil infrastructure are highly vulnerable to EMP ³¹ damages. The dollar amount of the civil infrastructure in itself can be estimated in the trillions of dollars that are at risk even for only one explosion - many trillions.

General Robert Marsh testifies:

— I recognize that there is a possibility that a rebel nation or even a group of terrorist rebels can make an EMP attack. In examining the possible vulnerabilities I estimate that the EMP is by far the riskier and most damageable one.

³⁰ This weapon causes the same damages as Marconi's weapon. Marconi had enough knowledge and equipment to make this kind of weapon. Furthermore this weapon is partly made with electric condensers, like those discovered in his laboratory after his death.

³¹ Electro Magnetic Pulse

Hitler's Pope

John Cornwell, a Catholic, published a historic book entitled "*Hitler's Pope*" that becomes a bestseller. This book repeats Hochhuth's theme and questions again Pope Pius XII of being biased towards the German and of having been silent on the fate of the Jews during the Second World War.

This book unleashed a deluge of commentaries in many newspapers, stimulating the readers' imagination.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI initiated the beatification proceedings of Pius XII. Doctor Peter Gumpel was the Vatican Judge. He was responsible of the "*Positio*" that was to be presented to the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints for Pope Pius XII. He stated that Cornwell's book contained factual errors and ignorance of the context at nearly every page. Anyhow Cornwell's book kept on stimulating popular imagery.

In 2002, it is the premiere of the Constantin Costa-Gavras film entitled *Amen* who is delighted at commenting his film to a reporter.

— Can you describe to me how you arrived at making the film *Amen* that you have just finished and that is being shown in cinemas?

— With pleasure. As you are well aware I have made many films having a political plot. These films are political thrillers. In 1969 I directed *Z* to

denounce the terror regime of the Greek Colonels of...

— You're Greek aren't you?

— I am naturalized French but originally I am of Greek origin. My father was a public servant who was accused of being a socialist. That revolted me so I then decided to denounce this political terrorism by directing *Z*. I got the story from a novel by Vassilis Vassilikos who relates to the real assassination of the deputy Lambrakis in Athens in 1963. Later I made *Confession* that denounces soviet totalitarianism and the communist trials that completely falsify reality. In 1973 I made *State of Siege* that denounces the CIA's covert operations in Latin America. In 1974, I made *Special section* that denounced the illegal practices of the Vichy regime during the Second World War. In 1982 I made *Missing* that denounced the activities of the CIA in Chili. Finally it is a long series of films that continues.

— You often use the term 'denounce'!

— Yes because I want to provoke the spectators.

— You are provoking controversy?

— Yes. I want the spectators to reflect about what is going on around them. I want to incite people to come and watch my film and to encourage them to talk about it. A film that isn't watched is useless so I provoke the spectators.

— To come back to the film *Amen*, on what is it based?

— It's based on the 1963 play *The Representative* by Rolf Hochhuth. In fact I was accompanied by Rolf Hochhuth at the Berlin festival. The play and the film are based on two characters, Fontana, a fictitious

priest and Kurt Gerstein, an authentic SS officer who wrote a book entitled *Confessions*, who exposed the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps. In reality Gerstein rose against the Nazi regime after one of his nieces names Bertha, a handicapped woman, was gazed in the name of eugenics. It's a historical fact.

— You maintain that there was a decisive meeting between Gerstein and the nuncio in Berlin. Well Gerstein says that there never was such a meeting.

— I had to dramatize; this film is not a historical documentary it's fiction.

— In your film there's no historical advisor. What was the reason for that?

— Yes I've had many historical advisors in films such as *Z* and *The Confession*. The problem with these specialists is that each one has his own interpretation. You can't get away from it. If I had hired one or two, it would have been the best way to have problems. After my reading I build up my own interpretation. And after all, cinema is a show. People come and watch a show.

— Isn't there a difference between revealing an occult truth and fiction?

— I question the inaction of the Catholic Church towards the Jews during the Second World War. As for me I refuse to stay silent as the Church was!

— You want to denounce the Church's silence?

— There is Church and there is church. In Latin America certain priests do an extraordinary work but the Vatican was and remains a political power. At that time, Pius XII considered more Stalin than Hitler as the enemy to fight.

— You bring up the problem of the extermination of the Jews?

— It's the enormity of the collective crime that is striking, the fact that the German state decided to exterminate a people with industrial means during a long period while using all the manpower that the businesses required. From 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers got up every morning to kill. And out of that there were people who resisted, some who collaborated and others who were indifferent. One can approach the episode from different angles. It will never be exhausted.

— But you maintain that the Church was largely responsible. Yet there were many illustrious Jews who testified the opposite. Israel's consul, Pinchas Lapidé, declared 'The Catholic Church saved more Jewish lives during the war than any other Church, religious institutions and aid organizations combined.'

— These Jews are entitled to their opinions.

— Indeed!

In 2005, in a British television station two animators are speaking:

— David Irving sued Doctor Deborah Lipstadt and her Editor Penguin Books for defamation for having published the book *'Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory'* that accused him of manipulating historical facts by affirming that the holocaust never happened. He was dismissed and even had to pay expensive court costs that led him to his bankruptcy.

— David Irving negated the existence of the

holocaust and Lipstadt exposed that fallacy.

— Great Britain is acknowledged as being the paradise for defamation suits because contrary to most other countries the author must prove what he states.

— Isn't it strange that, Rolf Hochhuth, the author of the play *The Representative* who denounces Pope Pius XII for remaining neutral concerning the Nazi atrocities during the Second World War, was a friend of Irving since 1963 and he even stayed with him some time in Switzerland?

— Not only was he a friend during about four years but it seems that he was an admirer. He would have qualified Irving as '*fabulous pioneer of contemporary history*' and a '*much more serious than many contemporary German historian*' during a broadcast of *Junge Freiheit* on February 18, 2005.

So he apparently admires an individual who wants to rewrite historical facts in an unscrupulous way 'a negationist'. Hochhuth seems proud of being associated with a person who tried to deform history.

— His judgement seems faulty. How could someone dare to make the eulogy of a historical forger!

— However he excused himself because he didn't want to offence the feelings of Jewish citizens.

— I am not Jewish, yet I feel profoundly offended!

— Me too!

— People seem to prefer illusion to reality!

— They're fascinated by the gossip merchants!

— Do they really care about Truth?